

## Harry SECOMBE

As a young man Harry, a council clerk in his home town of Swansea, had no thoughts of becoming a performer. World War Two changed all that.

Born 8<sup>th</sup> September 1921, he was always a jovial outgoing character and during his army service joined in camp concerts "just for the fun of it". But his crazy style of humour was so well received it earned a very favourable review by Andy Gray in the service newspaper The Union Jack. This set Harry thinking there may be more to civilian life than office work. It was during his service days that Harry first met fellow goon to be, Spike Milligan.

On demob in August 1946 Harry contacted Andy Gray who arranged for him to give an audition at London's Windmill Theatre and within a few weeks he was in theatre boss Vivian Van Damm's office doing just that. When Van Damm asked what he expected to be paid Harry decided to aim high, expecting to get a much lower figure, and said "twenty pounds a week". To his amazement he got it. So he became a professional performer, doing his comedy shaving routine six times a day between the nude shows on the stage of a theatre that was also the entry into show-business of several other 'stars' including Jimmy Edwards and Bruce Forsyth. But not all, on the same day he booked Harry, Van Damm turned down Norman Wisdom.

Not long after starting out on the road to fame, on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1948, Harry married his long time home town sweetheart Myra, the beginning of a great partnership.

On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January 1947 Harry appeared on a charity concert at the Royal Albert Hall. Titled 'A Breath of Fresh Air', it introduced a line up of newcomers that also included a very young Julie Andrews and memory man Leslie Welch.

After about a year of six shows a day at the Windmill, Harry had a spell in cabaret at La Martinique Restaurant, Brighton, before playing the dame in East Ham's Palace theatre's 1947 pantomime 'Dick Whittington'. May 1948 brought his first important London variety appearance, from Whit Monday, at Finsbury Park Empire.

One of Harry's first broadcasts was on the Carroll Levis 'Stars of the Forces' show, plus a couple of airings on 'Variety Bandbox'. These led to him getting a regular spot on the BBC Welsh Home Service 'Welsh Rarebit' series. It was on this show that Harry began to extend his comedy to include a song. Up until now his powerful vocal chords had been used just to provide some funny voices. Encouraged to take voice training his rich baritone was soon to be as much a trademark as his zany comedy.

Harry was a member of the team on a 1948 radio series 'Listen My Children', which also featured Benny Hill, Jon Pertwee, Benny Lee and Patricia Hayes with musical content from Carole Carr and the Vic Lewis Orchestra. The scripts were some of the first from Frank Muir and Denis Norden. He also broadcast on the Third Programme in a short lived comedy show 'Third Division' that also included Peter Sellers, Michael Bentine, Benny Hill and Carole Carr.

Harry, by now touring in variety, did a summer season with Cyril Fletcher at Torquay Pavilion during 1949 and for the summer of 1950 was up in Blackpool at the Opera House with Vera Lynn and

comedy mime artists George and Bert Bernard.

He joined several other comics in the 1949 film 'Helter Skelter', trying to make Carol Marsh laugh and thereby cure her hiccups!. Other early films were 'Fakes Progress' a mainly silent offering in 1950, 'London Entertains' a comedy-musical about the exploits of two Swiss girls in London and 'Penny Points to Paradise' in which he supposedly wins a fortune on the pools, both in 1951 and the Goon style romp 'Down Among the Z Men' in 1952.

While continuing to tour in variety 1951 turned out to be another big year for Harry on radio. In May he began a Luxemburg series 'Anything Can Happen' with Avril Angers, Alan Dean and Bob Monkhouse. The same month saw the start of a radio programme destined to keep him in work for the following ten years. 'Crazy People', that soon became 'The Goon Show', was just an excuse for Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers and Harry to play the fool and get paid for it, but how the audience loved them. During November he was on television with the Eric Winstone Orchestra and Butlin's Square Dance Team, in a variety show called 'Summer Camp' (in November?). On 29<sup>th</sup> October 1951 Harry played in his first Royal Variety Performance, at London's Victoria Palace and went on to appear in at least six more. During 1952 Harry took over the role of tutor on radio's 'Educating Archie' and, later in the fifties, even took Tony Hancock's part in a few editions of 'Hancock's Half Hour' when Tony was ill. He made appearances on 'Workers Playtime', 'Star Bill' and was on the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary edition of TV's 'Variety Parade' on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1955.

It was H.M.V. who finally realised the potential of the Secombe voice and in May 1952 issued his first disc, appropriately titled 'The heart of a clown' (Columbia had a version by Norman Wisdom). After a further two H.M.V. records, neither of which were big sellers, they lost interest and it wasn't until Philips gave Harry some serious tunes to wrap his tonsils around in 1955 did he make the charts with 'On with the motley', that reached No.16 in December. This wasn't the first 'classical' piece to feature on our Hit Parade, Winifred Atwell had been there with Rachmaninoff, but it was still pretty unusual.

In September 1955, Harry signed an exclusive contract with the new ABC commercial TV company and appeared on their first weekend variety show 'Saturday Showtime' from the old Wood Green Empire, now a TV studio, on 24<sup>th</sup> September. Harry was star of this show for the first six weeks of commercial television.

Early in 1956 he took his wife Myra off on holiday to Bermuda. On the way he appeared, with much success, on Ed Sullivan's popular American coast-to-coast TV show on Easter Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April 1965. Big American cars obviously took his fancy, because he specially imported a Dodge 'Custom Royal'.

Be it summer seasons, panto or touring variety, Harry continued throughout the decade to entertain live audiences with his comedy and songs. Highlights of the fifties included the London Palladium show 'Rocking the Town' with Winifred Atwell, Alma Cogan and Beryl Reid that ran from 17<sup>th</sup> May until December 1956. Harry took the show on tour the following year, but he was the only original member from the Palladium cast, now ably supported by singer Billie Anthony.

I was surprised to discover how many of 1950's films Harry appeared in. As well as those already

mentioned he was in the 1953 comedy 'Forces Sweetheart' with Hy Hazell playing the title role and the following year had a part in the melodramatic 'Svengali' starring Donald Wolfitt and Hildegard Neff. In 1957 Harry played his first starring role in the film 'Davy', a story about a member of The Mad Morgans comedy group who is torn between the chance of an operatic career or staying with comedy (something Harry himself must have considered more than once!). The film was premiered at the Leicester Square Empire Theatre, in a star studied midnight screening on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December 1957. Harry made the 100 mile drive from Coventry where he was appearing in the panto 'Puss in Boots', which ended at 10.00pm, joined the all night party and drove back again for the 2.00pm matinee. He had a small part in the 1959 mid-air drama movie 'Jet Storm' that starred Stanley Baker.

Still appearing in the Coventry panto, Harry made another flying visit (literally this time - by helicopter) to Cambridge University on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March. He joined the other Goons in a tiddlywinks contest against the students, in aid of the Duke of Edinburgh's Trust Fund.

May 1958 brought another London Palladium revue, Bernard Delfont's 'Large as Life' with Terry-Thomas, Eric Sykes, Harry Worth, Hattie Jacques and Adele Leigh. The same year he was presented with The Music Directors' Association 'baton' for being the years "most easy to work with artist". Harry was and remained one of the least affected 'stars' of British show-business. That's not to say he didn't enjoy what success had brought, and for Christmas 1958 treated himself to another new car. This time he bought British, a Rolls Royce Silver Cloud with the registration number HS 92.

Back on BBC TV, Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May 1959 delivered the first of the 'Secombe at Large' series with guests David Nixon and Julie Andrews. Harry was currently appearing around the country in a touring version of 'Large as Life' with Harry Worth, The Kaye Sisters and The George Mitchell Singers. The show spent the summer season at Brighton Hippodrome.

Back on tour in September, Harry headed a bill comprising Harry Worth, Hattie Jacques and Norman Vaughan entertaining servicemen in Cyprus. While there he introduced one end of a three way 'Family Favourites' with Dennis Scuse in London and Bill Crozier in Germany. Pantomime in 1959 was 'Humpty Dumpty' at the London Palladium with Alfred Marks, Gary Miller, Roy Castle and Sally Smith. Music was by Cyril Ornadel and book by David Croft. Harry was voted Show Business Personality of 1959 by the Variety Club of Great Britain.

The sixties saw Harry starring in 'Let Yourself Go' a season of comedy at the London Palladium in 1961, with Roy Castle, Marion Ryan, Eddie Calvert and Audrey Jeans and 'London Laughs', another Palladium revue in 1966, alongside Jimmy Tarbuck, Freddie Frinton, Thora Hird, Anita Harris and Russ Conway. Stage musicals included 'Pickwick' in 1963 (a role he returned to in the nineties) and 'The Four Musketeers' in 1967. Further films were 'Rhubarb' in 1961, 'The Bed Sitting Room' in 1968 and in the same year he played the excellent role of Mr. Bumble in 'Oliver'. Then there was 'Song of Norway' in 1969, 'Doctor in Trouble' (1970), 'The Magnificent Seven Deadly Sins' (1971) and 'Sunstruck' (1972).

Harry's record output continued to hop between the classics and pop, all well received by his many fans,

but it wasn't until 1963 that he hit the charts again with 'If I ruled the world' from the musical 'Pickwick'. The song was an Ivor Novello award winner. In 1967 Harry had his biggest hit (chartwise) when his recording of 'This is my song' almost made the top, reaching No.2 in April. Petula Clark's version had already made No.1, but it was Engelbert Humperdinck's 'Release me' that blocked Harry's attempt.

Hardly ever without a smile on his chubby face, Harry says he owes all his success to his wife Myra and their four children and the happy home-life they have shared over fifty years. Knighted in 1981, the following year he began a new career as the presenter of a Sunday evening semi-religious television series, 'Highway', for I.T.V. When the show was axed in 1992 he moved over to the BBC with a similar programme 'Songs Of Praise' This wasn't Harry's only religious connection, his brother Fred was vicar of Crocket Church near Swansea in the sixties and on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January 1962 the pair appeared together on ATV's 'About Religion'.

Harry's last few years were dogged with ill health, the discovery of prostate cancer in 1998 and a mild stroke in January 1999. He, understandable, decided it was time to put his feet up and retired from public life to take it easy, but even his immense spirit finally gave up the battle and Harry died on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

#### Harry Secombe Recordings

##### H.M.V.

B 10288 May 52 'The heart of a clown / A friend'  
B 10345 Oct 52 'Faith can move mountains / Here in my heart'  
B 10512 Jly 53 'I'll make you mine / One love one lifetime'

##### PHILIPS *(acc by Wally Stott orch on most)*

PB 523 Nov 55 'On with the motley / Strange harmony of contrasts'  
PB 550 Feb 56 'None shall sleep tonight / When the stars were brightly shining'  
PB 599 Jly 56 'We'll keep a welcome / The world is mine'  
PB 632 Oct 56 'La donna e mobile / Flower song from Carmen'  
PB 658 Mar 57 'Come back to Sorrento / Catarie, Catarie'  
PB 698 Jun 57 'Santa Lucia / O sole mio'  
PB 714 Nov 57 'O paradiso / M'appari' *(acc Emanuel Young orch)*  
PB 715 Sep 57 'My world is your world / While we are young'  
PB 802 Mar 58 'Because / Serenade'  
PB 840 Jly 58 'Ah! sweet mystery of life / At the Balalaika'

PB 851 Sep 58 *(with Adele Leigh)* 'The drinking song /

Miserere'  
PB 859 Oct 58 'God bless the Prince of Wales / All through

the night'  
PB 974 Nov 59 'The Holy City / Jerusalem'  
BF 1083 60 'Bless this house / The lost chord'  
BF 1177 61 'No man is an island / Count your blessings'  
BF 1196 61 'These things mean Christmas / The best

birthday of all'  
BF 1244 62 'Drinking song / Grinzing'  
326573 63 'Unforgiving heart / Fountain in Capri'

BF 1261 63 'If I ruled the world / Look into your heart'  
 BF 1286 Nov 63 'That's what I'd like for Christmas / O come all ye faithful'  
 BF 1477 64 'I long to see you today / Man without love'  
 BF 1523 66 'Here in my heart / Bambina'  
 BF 1539 67 'Song of the valley / This is my song'  
 BF 1625 67 'There comes a time / Masquerade'  
 BF 1808 69 'Shadows of the night / I believe in love'  
 BF 1841 70 'The song of Santa Vittoria / To learn to love'  
 6006103 70 'Strange music / Hill of dreams'  
 6006173 71 'If I ruled the world / Stranger in paradise'  
 6006278 73 'For my love / And yet, and yet'  
 6006359Jan 74 'When you look back on your life / Every day'  
 6006454Apr 75 'When you look back on your life / And yet, and yet'  
 6006598Jun 78 'Athena / Time was'

#### OLD GOLD

OG 9253 82 'If I ruled the world / This is my song'

#### STAR BLEND

STAR 1 84 'Whispering cheers / Keep love alive'

## SEMPRINI

Who can forget his introduction "old ones, new ones, loved ones, neglected ones", heralding another 'Semprini Serenade' broadcast of piano perfection, with just about something for everyone's taste and all played in his easy melodic style.

Fernando Riccardo Alberto Semprini (or Albert, even just Bert, as he preferred) was assumed by many to be Italian, but Semprini (as most of us knew him) was in fact born of Anglo-Italian parents in Bath, Somerset 27<sup>th</sup> March 1908.

At the age of 10 he went to live in Milan where he studied at the Verdi Conservatoire. By 1928 he had gained diplomas in pianoforte, musical composition and conducting and was relief conductor at several leading Italian opera houses. During the thirties he toured Europe as a duo with another pianist, until his partner died. Returning to Italy he formed a 45 piece orchestra that made many broadcasts there before the war. Around the early forties he recorded for Telefunken with a dance orchestra.

Despite being British by birth and with a U.K. passport he was called up for military service by the Italian authorities. Although he was eventually rejected as unfit, his passport was confiscated and he was always under suspicion as being pro-British (which he was). From thereon life in Fascist Italy became increasingly difficult, so he retired to San Remo to compose. In 1944 he went back to Rome to await the coming of the Allied Army and when they arrived offered his services to E.N.S.A.

Semprini's popularity in Britain is due in no small way to the efforts of Irish actor Michael Brennan. They first met while appearing with E.N.S.A. in Rome. Semprini, who was accompanying shows there, had been trying to reinstate his British passport and Brennan was prominent in helping him get it back and eventually brought Semprini to London in 1949.

The first year was something of a struggle, with him taking small cabaret bookings as available, but July

1950 saw the publication of his composition 'Mediterranean Concerto' (from which he took his signature tune) and suddenly things began to happen. H.M.V. Records signed him, the beginning of a long association and he began touring in variety; his excellent relaxed rhythmic style piano and easy going manner, with that slight continental touch - he was reported as being something of a ladies man - becoming a big hit with audiences. Touring the country he carried a grand piano, to practice on, in the back of a large van. Semprini topped the bill for several summer seasons at Blackpool.

Having already made his mark on radio, with Sunday evening airings of 'Semprini at the Piano', the BBC in September 1957 broadcast the first 'Semprini Serenade'. Backed by Harry Rabinowitz and the BBC Revue Orchestra, this was a show that continued to delight listeners year after year.

Semprini loved life on the water and for a time, with wife and family, he lived on a houseboat near Colchester. He also at different times had homes at Tollesbury on the river Blackwater in Essex and Brixham in Devon. Semprini, who gave up public performing in the late seventies, was awarded an OBE in 1983. He died, aged 81, on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 1990 having suffered Alzheimer's disease for some years.

Semprini recorded a long list of singles and LP's, many being medleys under the title 'Dancing to the Piano'. I've listed as much detail as I know.

Semprini Recordings

#### DECCA

C 16119 49 (*with orch acc Lys Assia*) 'Por tu carino'

H.M.V. (*piano with rhythm acc.*)

B 9954 Sep 50 'Mediterranean Concerto'  
(*his self composed theme tune*)

B 9987 Nov 50 'Dancing to the piano No.1 - Silver dollar / Mona Lisa / Have I told you lately /

Sometime /

If I were a blackbird / Goodnight

Irene'

B 10005 Dec 50 'Dancing to the piano No.2 - Can anyone explain / Me and my imagination /

Thinking of

you / Mambo jambo /

Progress /

Rumba

matumba'

B 10037 Mar 51 'Dancing to the piano No.3 - Tennessee waltz /

My heart cries for you / So goes my

heart /

Ferryboat inn / It's a marshmallow

world /

You are my true

love'

B 10055 Apr 51 'Dancing to the piano No.4 - A penny a kiss /

C'n I canoe you up the river / The

roving kind /

All my love / I'll always love you / Be

my love'

B 10074 May 51 'Dancing to the piano No.5 - Tea for two / I only

have eyes for you / Crazy rhythm / I

know that

you know / Charleston / I want to be

happy'

B 10078 Jun 51 'Kitten on the keys / Variations on boogie'  
 B 10103 Jly 51 'Dancing to the piano No.6 - The loveliest night

of the year / Unless / On top of Old

Smoky /		With these hands / Our very own / A beggar in	B 10317 Aug 52	(piano solo) 'Revolutionary study (Chopin) /
love'				Consolation No.3
B 10108 Aug 51	'The hot canary / Easy come, easy go'		(Listz)'	
B 10123 Sep	51 'Dancing to the piano No.7 - Alice in Wonderland / Too young / Forbidden		B 10335 Sep 52	'Meet Mr. Callaghan / Dancing to the piano
love /				No.16 - Waltz of Paree / Padam, padam /
fair /	By the kissing rock / My truly, truly			Under the roofs of Paris'
rag'		Ivory	B 10342 Oct 52	(with The Melachrino Orch) 'Themes from Mediterranean Concerto / The Mansell
B 10145 Oct 51	'Dancing to the piano No.8 - Shanghai / Good	morning Mr. Echo / Tulips and	Concerto'	
heather /		Longing for you / That's how a love	B 10352 Oct 52	'Dancing to the piano No.17 - Auf wiederseh'n
song is		born / Oh marry, marry me'	The	sweetheart / I'm yours / Trust in me / homing waltz / There's a pawnshop on the
B 10162 Nov 51	'Dancing to the piano No.9 - Sweet			corner / Waltz of Paree'
violets /	While you danced, danced, danced /		B 10379 Nov 52	'Smoke gets in your eyes / I won't dance'
La ronde /	Cold, cold heart / Because of		B 10394 Dec 52	'Dancing to the piano No.18 - Here in my heart /
you /		I'll be		Half as much / Isle of Innisfree / Day of Jubilo /
around'				Sugar bush / Rock of Gibraltar'
B 10195 Jan 52	'Dancing to the piano No.10 - Down the trail of	achin' hearts / Allentown jail / My	B 10402 Jan 53	'Maria Dolores (Bolero) / Esa es la mona
inspiration /		Then I'll be there / I love the way you	(Mambo)'	
say			B 10426 Feb 53	(with Melachrino Orch) 'Theme from The Last
goodnight / Sin'				Rhapsody / Etude in D flat (Liszt)'
B 10210 Feb 52	'Dancing to the piano No.11 - Life is a beautiful	thing / Turn back the hands of time /	B 10441 Mar 53	'Dancing to the piano No.19 Hit Medley'
Rollin'		stone / Marshmallow moon / Why	B 10457 Apr 53	'Dancing to the piano No.20 Hit Medley'
should I		believe in love / My	B 10470 May	53 'Malaguena / (with vocal chorus) La comparsa'
beloved'			C 4223 Jun 53	(with Melachrino Orch) 'Rhapsody for
B 10231 Mar 52	'Dancing to the piano No.12 - We won't live in	a castle / While we're young /	Elizabeth'	
Domino /		You're just in love / The best thing for	B 10537 Sep 53	'Dancing to the piano No.21 Hit Medley'
you /		It's a lovely day today'	B 10554 Oct 53	(piano solo) 'Serenade to Eileen / Prelude
B 10245 Apr 52	'Flirtation waltz / Dancing to the piano No.13 -	Brokenhearted / Painting the clouds	to peace'	
with		sunshine / I can't	B 10592 Nov 53	'Dancing to the piano No.22 Hit Medley'
help it'			B 10612 Dec 53	'Selection from Bandwagon'
B 10263 May	52 'Dancing to the piano No.14 - Slow		B 10623 Jan 54	'Petite ballerina / Autumn rhapsody'
coach / Cry	/ Unforgettable / Little white cloud		B 10634 Feb 54	(piano solo) 'Theme from The Glenn Miller Story /
that cried /		I'm lucky I have you / Tell me	Tenderly'	
why'			B 10678 Apr 54	(with Melachrino Orch) 'Theme from The Story
B 10271 Jun 52	(piano solo) 'Santa Lucia / Come back to			of Three Loves / The harmonica player'
Sorrento'			B 10699 May	54 'Eleanora / Chiqui-chaqui'
B 10281 Jun 52	'Dancing to the piano No.15 - Anytime / You're	the only one I love / Never / A-round	B 10711 Jun 54	'Dancing to the piano No.23 Hit Medley'
the corner		/ I wanna say hello / True loves and	B 10742 Sep 54	(piano solo) 'Fantaisie-Impromptu (Chopin) /
false				Rustle of spring'
lovers'			B 10784 Nov 54	(with Melachrino Orch) La campanella / Hungarian
B 10295 Jly 52	(with The Melachrino Orch) Opening theme	from Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto	march'	
No.1 /		1st movement of Greig Piano	B 10809 Jan 55	(piano solo) 'Etude in A flat major (Chopin) /
Concerto'				Cradle song (Brahms)'
			B 10826 Feb 55	(piano solo) 'Tango in D (Albeniz) / Spanish dance No.5
			(Andaluza)'	
			B 10863 May	55 (with orch) 'Dance of Granada / Parakeet'
			B 10873 Jun 55	'World of love / Yodel mazurka'
			B 10934 Nov 55	(with Melachrino Orch) 'First rhapsody / Tristesse
			(Chopin)'	
			POP 372 Jly 57	'Forgotten dreams / Scusami'

POP 384 Sep 57	'The Destiny theme / Invitation waltz'
POP 461 Mar 58	'The tale of two cities / L'edera'
POP 765 Jly 60	'Theme from The Apartment / Isle of Humming Birds'
7P 263 60	'London Fantasia (two versions)'
7P 272 60	(with <i>Melachrino Orch</i> ) 'Themes from piano concertos by Tchaikovsky and Grieg'
POP 842 Mar 61	'Main theme from Exodus / Lark in the clear air'
7P 310 61	(with <i>Melachrino Orch</i> ) '18th Variation (Rachmaninov) / The Last Rhapsody theme'
7P 321 62	(with <i>New Abbey Light Orch</i> ) 'Ritual fire dance / Autumn'
POP 1071 62	'Autumn song / Rosanna'
POP 1153 63	'Theme from Mondo Cane / Trop tard'
POP 1168 63	'Theme from The War Lover / Hatari'
COLUMBIA	
DB 8968 73	'Valachi Papers love theme / Lady Caroline Lamb theme'

## Charles SHADWELL

Best known for his years as leader of the BBC Variety Orchestra, Charlie was more than just a bandleader. With his infectious chuckle he was a great performer and delighted in being at the receiving end of a succession of comedians' leg-pulls and jokes. He played this role on numerous radio shows like 'Music Hall', 'Garrison Theatre', 'Monday Night At Eight' and 'It's That Man Again' (ITMA) where he became something of an institution, taking all kinds of insults (all in fun) from the star Tommy Handley. Each week the orchestra played a special concert arrangement of a traditional tune that he'd specially written for the show.

Charles was born at East Grinstead, Surrey in March 1898 and took up music at an early age, becoming Entertainments Officer of the West Yorkshire Regiment during World War One. After the war he studied at the Royal Academy of Music and began his professional career, like many others at the time, playing piano for silent films.

During the 1920's he toured as musical director in revues and then had spells as conductor at both the Portsmouth and Brighton Hippodrome theatres. But Charles Shadwell began to be really noticed when, in 1931, he took over the pit orchestra at Coventry Hippodrome. It was here that he began building up a repartee with the visiting variety artists, to the extent that many comedians when visiting the Hippodrome included him in their act. He also made several broadcasts from the theatre.

In 1936, his many talents having obviously been noticed by the BBC, he left Coventry to take over the BBC Variety Orchestra in London, a position he retained throughout the second war. Another member of the Shadwell family was also regularly heard on radio during the war years. Charles and his wife Gwen had two daughters, Joan and Daphne and it was Joan (who used the stage name Joan Winters) who became Jack Warner's 'Little Gel'. Usually playing a cigarette girl, she would interrupt his act calling "chocolates, cigarettes, candy" and he would then proceed to 'chat her up'. Charles

appeared in the 1943 musical film 'Variety Jubilee'.

In April 1946, after ten hard but no doubt enjoyable years at the BBC, he left and took his own band show, including singer Marion Sanders, off on a tour of variety theatres across the country. Already a popular figure from his broadcasts, this was a great success.

Back on air in 1948 his band featured on Ralph Reader's 'It's Fine to be Young' shows and he also led a string orchestra for the Friday night series 'Rustle Of Spring'. With these commitments he did little touring during the year, but from Whitsun 1949 his orchestra was resident for the summer season at Southend's Westcliff bandstand. And into the fifties it was the resident summer shows that Charles turned to for a large slice of his income.

He returned to Southend for further summer seasons in 1950 and 1951, while the winter months found him back in town waving the baton for shows like the Crazy Gang's 'Knights of Madness' at Victoria Palace. Charlie also took on the musical director role for Tom Arnold's regular Christmas Circus at Harringay Arena, every year from 1947 through to at least the mid-fifties.

June 1952 saw the start of four summer seasons at Paignton's Pavilion Theatre. An essential part of each week's entertainment programme was the talent contest and a big winner the first year was a young singer by the name of Michael Day. Shadwell was so impressed with his discovery, he persuaded Michael to give up his job in the building trade and join the orchestra for the 1953 season. Others also noticed this fine singer and it wasn't long before he'd been lured away to greater things and reappeared as Bobbie Britton, Ted Heath's replacement for Dickie Valentine. Not bad promotion for a newcomer. The orchestra made regular Tuesday afternoon broadcasts from Paignton. A slight diversion during November 1954 found the Shadwell band supporting American singer Guy Mitchell during his tour of Britain.

June 1955 brought another change of holiday venue when Charles signed with the Henry Hall organization to spend the season at Scarborough. The orchestra performed mornings at the Sun Court enclosure and in the evenings at the Grand Hall and featured vocalists Joy Holman and Steve Arlen. A special occasion during one of his Scarborough concerts, on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1955, was the presentation of a leather briefcase by the Songwriters Guild of Great Britain in recognition of Shadwell's support for British Songwriters.

Charles returned to Scarborough for a further two seasons, but he eventually gave up show-business to take on the role of mine-host of a village pub, The Green Man at Trumpington near Cambridge. Eventually, in 1973, he retired to a flat in Pershore, Worcestershire and died there on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1979, aged 81. Daughter Joan now lives in California and Daphne is a TV producer.

Tall and thin, Tommy Handley once described him as "the human hairpin", Shadwell's style was not dance band but a more relaxing light music, ideal for the concert audience he played to. He began recording on the Regal Zonophone label with his Coventry Hippodrome Orchestra in the thirties. During his time at the BBC he made few recordings, although he did record for Decca's export London label and a few sides from this time later emerged on the Decca label. He returned to a brief spell of regular recording with H.M.V. in 1946.

## Charles Shadwell Orchestra Recordings

### REGAL ZONOPHONE (*Coventry Hippodrome Orchestra*)

MR 946 'Good Old Tunes (*two parts*)'  
 MR 969 'Tommy's Tunes (*two parts*)'  
 MR 1915 'Happy Selection (*two parts*)'  
 MR 2089 'Welcome Vienna Selection (*two parts*)'

H.M.V. (*BBC Variety Orchestra  
 with Reginald Foort at the organ*)

BD 523 Apl 38 'Seville (Cities of Romance - H.Wood) /  
 Lulworth Cove'  
 BD 550 Jun 38 'Curtain up (Ballerina Suite - A.Wood) /  
 Manhattan moonlight'

(*Charles Shadwell Orchestra*)

B 9487 Jly 46 'Down the Mall / Down with the curtain  
 (*his own composition and signature tune*)'  
 C 3501 Aug 46 'Perchance To Dream selection'  
 B 9506 Nov 46 'Concerto in jazz (*solo piano Eric James*)'  
 B 9526 Feb 47 'Melody on the move / The dancer at the fair'  
 B 9586 Oct 47 'Picture parade / Prelude to a dream'  
 B 9619 Feb 48 'The spice of life (*signature tune of radio's Saturday evening 'Music Hall'*) /  
 Without a song'

DECCA (*with the BBC Variety Orch -  
 recorded before he left the BBC*)

F 8523 May45 'Here's to good old whisky /  
 Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay'  
 F 8527 Sep 47 'ITMA signature tune / The British Grenadiers'  
 F 9091 Mar49 'Ten green bottles / Baa baa black sheep'

## Dave SHAND

Born into the entertainment industry, his family owned a small cinema in Dundee, Dave was led towards a musical career by his piano playing elder sister who played in a small group. It was another member of that group who taught Dave to play saxophone. During his student days at University College, Dundee he joined a musical crowd and was soon proficient enough to play part time in a semi-pro dance band.

Leaving college, having attained an M.A. and considering his future Dave was offered the chance to lead a band in Aberdeen and he took it. The drummer-vocalist was George Elrick and when George left for better things in London, Dave wasn't far behind.

Following a period of struggle and hard times with little work, he got a job with the Jack Hylton organization, eventually joining Jack's own band touring Europe and America. After five years with Hylton, Dave gained further experience in Sydney Lipton's society orchestra at Grosvenor House. Next was a spell with Jack Payne's band and then Maurice Winnick at the Dorchester Hotel. Just before the outbreak of war Dave was a member of The Heralds

of Swing at the Paradise Club and doubled as lead saxophone on Teddy Joyce Band broadcasts from the Paramount Dance Hall, Tottenham Court Road.

In 1939 Dave joined the army, where after six years he was demobbed with the rank of Major in the Royal Artillery. It wasn't long before he was back on the bandstand, now a member of the new Ted Heath Orchestra. After five years touring he left Ted for a spell of stability and joined Maurice Winnick again, now resident at Ciro's Club.

Being London based, Dave was available for solo broadcasting work and played on several light music programmes. Melody Maker voted him 'top baritone sax' in their 1951 poll. In 1952 he was a member of the orchestra that accompanied Danny Kaye on his U.K. tour and he led the orchestra that backed Bob Hope during his visit. During 1953 Dave was once again back with Sydney Lipton at Grosvenor House. Now established as a leader, in early 1954 he formed his Modern Music band and played some variety appearances including London's Metropolitan Theatre from 17<sup>th</sup> May. The group made their first broadcast on Ted Heath's late night 'Swing Session' on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May returning on several occasions. Dave later had a short series 'The Still of the Night' and did a spell at the Copacabana Restaurant in London's West End. Over a couple of years the band used several female vocalists, Gina Martin, Valerie Ware and Annette Scott.

Dave continued to freelance on many recordings (he was soloist on the Cyril Stapleton Orchestra recording 'Ava' on Decca F10359), did a considerable amount of film work and broadcasts, often leading his nine piece outfit with its unusual three trumpet line up. In 1956 he made his first and apparently only recording as a bandleader on the Oriole label.

Dave had a small part in the 1956 Charlie Chaplin film 'A King in New York' as a member of a night club group. During that year he took his band on a ballroom tour, including a summer season at Queen's Ballroom, Rhyl. Over the next few years Dave Shand and his Music played resident seasons at Wembley's Majestic Ballroom, the Wimbledon Palais and the Savoy Hotel. From January 1957 he was musical director on the Bernard Braden Monday evening ITV show 'Two for the Money'.

### Dave Shand Band Recordings

#### ORIOLE

CB 1321 Mar56 'Lizzie Borden / Rocking the boat'  
 (*v. Annette Scott*)

## Jimmy SHAND

Jimmy Shand was a native of East Wemyss in Fifeshire where his father was a miner. Born 28<sup>th</sup> January 1908, he was brought up in a musical household as his father played a melodeon (a kind of accordion). Jimmy himself took up the instrument when he was given a 10 key model as a birthday gift by an aunt.

When he was 14 he left school and began work as a pit boy in the local mine. However the depression set in some four years later and young Jimmy was out of work. So he took the bus to Dundee and obtained a job as a delivery van driver for a firm of music publishers. On a weekly wage of just 35/- he bought, through his firm, a button key accordion

costing some £36. In fact after paying his landlady he was left with just two shillings and eight pence a week to live on! The day was saved when his big brother stepped in and paid the bill.

In 1933 Jimmy became a professional musician and in November of that year visited the recording studio for the first time, when Regal Zonophone decided to record a number of Scottish and Irish artists for their catalogue. He was billed as "Jimmy Shand on the British Chromatic Accordion", which was a 23 treble instrument. Fifty years later in 1983 he recorded an LP playing a Shand Morino, a 46 treble instrument made by Hohner to his own specification. Incidentally on that first recording session he recorded a set of jigs and a set of reels (MR 1387 & MR 1388).

Serving with the fire service during war time Jimmy formed a band that entertained at local dances and parties. He acquired a much wider audience when he made his radio debut on the BBC Scottish Home Service in 1945. From then on he became almost the 'Sound of Scotland' playing and appearing at dances and concerts throughout the UK and also Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Jimmy's band played for royalty at the annual Ghillies Ball held by the royal family at Balmoral Castle and on stage in the Royal Scottish Variety Performance at Glasgow's Alhambra theatre. He was a stalwart of the BBC TV series 'White Heather Club', and no party was complete without a record or two from Jimmy Shand. His recording of 'Bluebell Polka' became a No.20 chart hit in 1955.

Ill health forced him to virtually give up public performances by the mid seventies. During his later years Jimmy, who ended his days as Sir Jimmy - he was knighted by the Prince of Wales in 1999 - lived in Auchtermuchty, a small town on the site of an old Roman Camp in Fife. He died aged 92 from pneumonia at Perth hospital on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2000. And for all those readers who consider Jimmy Shand's music a bit 'square', a comment from fellow Scot and top trombone player George Chisholm who when asked once in a radio interview to name who he considered to be the swingiest bands - came up with Count Basie and Jimmy Shand! Of course it raised eyebrows, but he said "give him a listen", so they played one of his numbers ..... and it really does swing.

(I have to thank the late Alasdair Fenton for supplying much of the details about Jimmy Shand)

*As Jimmy and his band recorded so many sides - for a long period his output was two records a month - many of them medleys, plus several solo items, I've not attempted to list them.*

## Cyril SHANE

A versatile and popular 1940's vocalist, Cyril's talents can be assessed from the number of top bandleaders who were more than eager to avail themselves of his services.

A Londoner, born Cyril Simnock on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1922, he began work in a woollen warehouse becoming a commercial traveller. Always ready to break into song, it was wartime that brought about a big change of direction for Cyril. This wasn't so much his introduction to His Majesty's Forces (a change of direction for many at the time), but more so his introduction to show-business.

In 1941, singing to entertain crowds down an air-raid shelter during the blitz, he was heard by BBC producer Michael Standing who gave him a spot on radio's 'In Town Tonight', broadcast from an air-raid shelter. This resulted in Cyril being booked to sing at The Studio, a club in Knightsbridge that encouraged new talent. More exposure came with another broadcast, on 'Monday Night At Eight'. Now being noticed, Percival Mackey used Cyril on one of his band's broadcasts and on the strength of it Geraldo signed him to stand in for vocalist Len Camber who was ill.

Several bands took advantage of Cyril's fine voice to enhance their recordings, his first probably being 'Some sunny day' with Billy Thorburn. Others he recorded with during 1942 were the New Mayfair Dance Orchestra led by Phil Green and Oscar Rabin.

In April 1942, now with the Oscar Rabin Band having replaced Bob Dale who was called up in February, Cyril suffered the same fate when he was drafted into the R.A.M.C.

Cyril's army career came to an end in 1944 when he was invalided out, not from service on the battlefield but on the cricket pitch! Playing in a regimental match near Folkestone, they came under fire from an attack by German dive bombers. Several players were killed, so Cyril counted himself lucky to survive. Even so he received serious injury that required a long stay in hospital.

As soon as he was out of bandages one of the first things he did was to marry his sweetheart Mildred, who he had been courting since he was 16. He began singing again, joining the service orchestra of No.1 Balloon Centre in 1944. They of course became better known as The Skyrockets and Cyril stayed with them until May 1947.

By then his appearances were restricted to mainly broadcasts and recordings. This was because The Skyrockets were now the pit orchestra at the London Palladium, with little use for a vocalist. Consequently Cyril left and during the summer of 1947 sang with Mantovani and his Orchestra, resident for the season at the Barbecue Restaurant in Bournemouth.

With the season over, Cyril decided to check out the show-business scene in America. During a six month stay he made some media appearances, but in May 1948 came home somewhat disillusioned.

On home ground he quickly resumed his busy schedule, freelancing with various bands. During 1948 he toured and broadcast with the Ronnie Pleydell Orchestra and was with them when they took up residency at the Embassy Club in January 1949. He sang with Harry Roy's Band at the Cafe Anglais and spent two years with David Java and his Orchestra at New Queen's Restaurant in Leicester Square.

By now Cyril had also established himself as a successful song-plugger acting for music publishers including Mills Music, Keith Prowse and Kassner, where he became general manager of their Grosvenor Music Co.

Cyril continued to broadcast working with bands such as Nat Temple and Paul Fenoulhet and appeared solo on shows like 'Music Hall' etc. but his commercial interests began to demand more and more of his time.

His recordings had more or less dried up by the close of the forties, solo artists were taking over from the dance bands and his final H.M.V. disc was a solo offering and not just a vocal refrain to The

Skyrockets as all previous H.M.V's had been. Cyril's only single during the fifties was a one-off on the little known Planet label, but it sold quite well and brought him some welcome broadcast work. He also recorded some songs for the Top Hits of the Month Record Club.

His success in music publishing was quickly recognised and when the well established American Bernstein Music Corporation opened a U.K. office in 1960 it appointed Cyril as Managing Director. It only took a few more years for Cyril, encouraged by his wife Mildred, to decide it would make more sense if he was working for himself, so the Cyril Shane Organisation was formed, and flourished.

In 1976, while maintaining his London office, Cyril moved with Mildred and their son and daughter out to California, where he added to his pile by dabbling in real estate. Unfortunately this enjoyable lifestyle was shattered in 1984 when Mildred died from cancer. Cyril himself has also since undergone heart surgery, but as far as I'm aware this 76 year old veteran is well and still enjoying the Californian sunshine, as I write this with the outside temperature around zero.

Cyril Shane Recordings

REX (with *Primo Scala Accordion Band*)

10042 Sep 41 'Russian rose / St. Mary's in the twilight'

PARLOPHONE (with *Billy Thorburn's Organ, Dance Band & Me*)

F 1893 Jan 42 'Some sunny day'

H.M.V. (with *New Mayfair Dance Orch*)

BD 5730 Feb 42 'I know why'

BD 5731 Feb 42 'When night is thro''

DECCA (with *Oscar Rabin Orch*)

F 8107 Apl 42 'When the roses bloom again'

F 8108 Apl 42 'Madelaine'

COLUMBIA (with *Jimmy Leach Organolians*)

FB 3053 Oct 44 'Fascination'

FB 3108 May 45 'A little on the lonely side'

DECCA (with *Primo Scala Accordion Band*)

F 8612 Apl 46 'Two can live as cheeply as one'

H.M.V (with *The Skyrockets*)

BD 5908 Nov 45 'Symphony'

BD 5913 Dec 45 'My heart sings / I'll close my eyes'

BD 5916 Jan 46 'I'm so all alone'

BD 5920 Feb 46 'Please don't say no'

BD 5921 Mar 46 'A door will open'

BD 5924 Apl 46 'Love letters'

BD 5933 Jun 46 'Mary Lou'

BD 5935 Jly 46 'As if I didn't have enough on my mind'

BD 5938 Aug 46 'Primrose Hill'

BD 5940 Sep 46 'Day by day'

BD 5941 Sep 46 'The 'Ampstead Way / So would I'

BD 5947 Nov 46 'One more tomorrow'

BD 5952 Dec 46 'I wish I had my time to spend again'

BD 5955 Dec 46 'All by myself'

BD 5966 Apl 47 'I keep forgetting to remember'

BD 5970 May 47 'The rickety rickshaw man'

BD 5979 Jun 47 'Down the old Spanish Trail /

I get up every

morning'

COLUMBIA

FB 3268 Jan 47 (with *Jimmy Leach Organolians*)

'I'm forever blowing

bubbles'

FB 3442 Dec 48 'Time alone will tell /

Hair of gold, eyes of

blue'

PLANET

E 1004 Mar 54 'Love me / Oh hear my plea'

## Valerie SHANE

An ambitious young lady, Valerie Shane began life as Valerie Kleiner and won a 'Melody Maker' Vocalist of the Year contest when she was only 15. As a schoolgirl she'd always had stars in her eyes and took singing and dancing lessons.

On leaving school she sang at the Nottingham Astoria Ballroom and appeared with the Ken Moule Jazz Group on some concerts. Valerie spent several months with Basil Kirchin's Band and sang with several other jazz groups including Tony Kinsey and Ronnie Scott. As a solo vocalist she toured American service camps in Europe. Next came a three month season with the Derek Sinclair Band at Leeds, followed by a spell out of show-business.

But Valerie didn't waste her time and studied drama and ballet, while taking a day job in a chemist's shop. To get back in the business she took a job at London's Windmill Theatre, singing on six shows a day for six months.

This paid off and early in 1958 she was given a spot on ITV's 'Bid For Fame' followed by appearances on 'Top Numbers' and 'Six Five Special'. This led to some variety and cabaret bookings. Valerie became a familiar face in London's night-spots, appearing at Jack o' Clubs, The Astor Club, The Embassy Club, The Stork Room, The Tropicana Club and Freddie's Bar, often working two at one time.

Philips took notice and her first record, a cover of Valerie Carr's 'When the boys talk about the girls', was out in June 1958. Just two more discs followed and that seems to have been that.

Valerie Shane Recordings

PHILIPS

PB 833 Jun 58 'When the boys talk about the girls /

Careful,

careful'

PB 879 Nov 58 'Meet me tonight in Dreamland /

One billion, seven million thirty

three'

PB 929 May 59 'Make love to me / Baisez moi' (acc by

Ivor Raymond

orch)

## Ralph SHARON

Born in London in 1923 he learnt piano from his mother a former New York night club pianist. Around the early forties, while employed on war work in Slough, he formed a small jazz group with guitarist Pete Chilver that played local clubs. Calling themselves The Embassy Aces, the band won the Buckingham section of the 1942 'Melody Maker' dance band championship, with Ralph taking individual prize for his piano playing. During the remaining war years he had a brief spell in Jack Parnell's Quartet and worked with Ted Heath and others.



Early 1946 Ralph joined Sid Gross Garter Club Sextet, but soon moved on to Frank Weir's Orchestra where he stayed about two years. In 1949 he was fronting his own five piece at the Stork Club, comprising Jimmy Skidmore on tenor sax, Charles Short bass, Terry Brown guitar and newcomer Martin Aston on drums. At the same time he was working in the pit orchestra at the Saville Theatre. An exponent of the late forties bop idiom, Ralph played in several bop groups alongside such famous names as Johnny Dankworth, Ronnie Scott and Carlo Krahmer.

Throughout the fifties the Ralph Sharon Sextet spent much time touring the Continent and across America, where by the sixties he had settled permanently. Ralph became musical director to singer Tony Bennett and, alongside his own freelance work, has worked with him ever since. They were together on a Bank Holiday concert at Leeds Castle at the end of May 2000, with a recording shown on BBC television early June.

Ralph made several recordings, as a solo and with his sextet.

Ralph Sharon Recordings  
(*Sextet unless shown*)

TECHNIDISC

TD 102 49 'Bop Style for Piano'  
TD 107 49 'Modern Piano Extemporisation'

HARMONY

? Oct 49 (*Ralph Sharon Boptet*) 'How high the moon  
/

Euphoria' (*v. Doreen Henry*)

MELODISC

1118 May 50 'Burman's bauble / Boptical illusion'  
1119 May 50 'There's a small hotel /

I've got you under  
my skin'  
1129 Oct 50 'A nightingale sang in Berkeley  
Square /

The very thought  
of you'

1156 Mar 51 'Stalking the stork / Two sleepy

people'

1161 Apl 51 'Sloppy Joe / You go to my head'

1169 Jun 51 'Slightly Oliver / A bachelor gay'

1176 Oct 51 'Heart and soul / You are my lucky

star'

1200 Jan 52 'Someone to watch over me /

Don's dilemma

(*Trio*)

1201 Nov 51 'Skylark (*Trio*) / I get a kick out of

you'

1213 Apl 52 'Zing went the strings of my heart /

Serenade

in blue'

1227 Oct 52 'Bill / Where or when'

LYRAGON

J 705 Feb 53 'Love walked in / Room Five

Hundred & Four'

DECCA

F 10191 Nov 53 (*piano solo*) 'Indian summer / September  
song'

# A. P. SHARPE

If you're into Hawaiian music you will most certainly have heard of Mr. A. P. Sharpe. I have to be honest and admit that I know very little about him, and it was a long time before I discovered his Christian names were Albert Percy.

I did know he was managing director of Clifford Essex Music Ltd. and for much of his life made a study of authentic South Sea rhythms, and had a vast personal record and music library. He wrote a book on the subject 'Spotlight on Hawaii'. He was also writing another book on the history of the banjo - something he'd been working on for many years - that unfortunately remained unpublished at the time of his death.

Around the late thirties he formed an all string sextet to promote his favourite music, calling it A. P. Sharpe's Honolulu Hawaiians. Not a member of the group himself, he employed electric guitarist Ronnie Joynes to lead the outfit that was completed by three plectrum guitars, a ukulele and a string bass.

Off the road during the war (although it appears to have recorded during that time) it was reformed in 1945 and made numerous broadcasts, many on the series 'Hawaii Calling', and recorded for Regal Zonophone. The band, that included piano playing Kathleen Heppell as vocalist, played a summer season at Ventnor Winter Gardens on the Isle of Wight in 1947. They toured Devon during the summer of 1948 and Cornwall the year after.

A. P. Sharpe died January 1968 aged 61. Listed are recordings by the A.P Sharpe Hawaiians that I know of, there are probably others.

REGAL ZONOPHONE

MR 3538 Nov 41 'On the beach at Waikiki / Hilo Island  
hula'

MR 3561 Dec 41 'Paradise / South Sea swing'

MR 3577 Jan 42 'Goodbye Hawaii / Memories of

Hawaii'

MR 3600 42 'Dorothy Lamour memories (two

sides)'

MR 3730 Jan 44 'Under South Sea palms / The one

rose'

# Bob SHARPLES

The name leading the orchestra behind many Decca stars, Bob Sharples was a Northerner from Heap Bridge in Greater Manchester. A boy prodigy, he was organist and choir master of his local church at age 15. He studied for a degree in music, but the death of his father forced him to find work and he began playing piano in London clubs. He joined the Ambrose Orchestra, then war intervened.

After service as a Captain in the R.A.S.C. Bob returned to civvy street and began working as an arranger for music publishers and bands like Geraldo, Jack Payne and Teddy Foster. He did some work for the BBC, including arrangements for Cyril Stapleton's Show Band and led a 12 piece on Arthur Askey's 'Hello Playmates' radio series.

In 1947 Kathryn Grayson the American film star appeared at the London Palladium and visited E.M.I studios to cut some 12 titles including 'Always', using Bob as musical director. She later wrote thanking him for his efforts on the session, "my one and only fan letter" he said.

By 1954 Bob was a staff arranger-conductor for Decca Records and between 1955 and 1957 was responsible for no fewer than 18 hit discs. As well as his main duty of backing vocalists, he recorded

several instrumental albums for the label. Bob arranged 'Eleanora' and 'The Italian theme' for Cyril Stapleton and in return Cyril recorded the Bob Sharples composition 'Mexican madness'.

In 1961 he joined ABC-TV as musical consultant and led the ABC Television Orchestra. Later he became MD of Thames TV.

Bob Sharples & his Music Instrumental Recordings

DECCA

F 10450 Jan 55 (BS Dance Music) 'Capitano / Time remembered'  
 F 10707 Mar 56 'Hurricane boogie / Concetta'  
 F 10748 Jun 56 'The Portuguese washerwoman / Sadie's shawl'  
 F 10838 Jan 57 'Ooh-la-la oui-oui / Afrika'  
 F 10922 Jul 57 (BS Chorus & Orch) 'In the middle of an island / Who will kiss your ruby lips?'

## Mike SHAUN

Mike, an orphan, lived in institutions until he left school and then worked as a waiter-washer up at a hotel until National Service took him to Malaya, where he contracted malaria. During convalescence in Singapore he began singing in N.A.A.F.I. concerts. Back home in Belfast, he took odd jobs for about a year before deciding to try singing as a career. He moved to Blackpool, but the closest he got to show business was washing up at the Tower Ballroom. He made another move to nearby Preston and for about three years worked in a garage, getting a few singing jobs in pubs in the evening. In 1954 soft voiced Mike came to London and after many attempts secured an appearance on Hughie Green's television show 'Opportunity Knocks', being voted into second place behind a jazz band. A representative of Oriole Records saw him and arranged for a test with the result being his first record 'Love is a gamble' issued in November 1956. Despite this he continued to work as a garage mechanic.

Few details of Mike's later activities are available, but in April 1959 he was one of the regular singers on radio's 'Saturday Music Album' a two hour Saturday evening series, that also featured The Stargazers, Andy Cole and Eric Jupp's Orchestra. Later the same year he was on the 'Music for Always' series and was plugging his new Pye International recording on 'Cool for Cats'. This was his first disc in two years, a period during which it appears Mike's musical career was full of ups and downs. In 1961 he spent the summer season with the Phil Moss Band at the Villa Marina on the Isle of Man, but I don't know what happened to him after that, although I believe he still made a living performing around the northern club circuit. He obviously continued singing, for he turned up on at least one Decca L.P (ECS 2003), a 1969 album of songs from the musicals 'My Fair Lady' and 'The King and I', with Cyril Stapleton's Orchestra.

In May 1999 subscriber Graham Smith informed me that he had recently seen Mike singing (very well, he said) at the Sinatra Bar in Benidorm, and further information suggests he still resides out in that sunny climate.

Mike Shaun Recordings

ORIOLE

CB 1336 Nov 56 'Love is a gamble / Mirabelle'  
 CB 1351 Feb 57 'From the bottom of my heart / Time on my hands'  
 CB 1369 May 57 'Dancing in the streets / Funny what a kiss can do'  
 CB 1375 Jun 57 'Getting nowhere fast / Life should be a lively thing'  
 CB 1391 Sep 57 'Chances are / Please don't blame me' (acc by Johnny Gregory oprch)

PYE INTERNATIONAL

7N25035 Sep 59 'A shamrock in the sky / S-L-E-E-P' (acc by Reg Owen orch & chorus)  
 7N25053 Mar 60 'Love me a little / Ho dee-ing dong'

DECCA

F 11733 Sep 63 'Let's fall in love / So lonely'

## Beri SHAW

Beri, who was really Beryl Thomson an ex-kennel maid from Mitcham in Surrey, began her show business career during the war, touring with ENSA and is reported as having looked after General Eisenhower's pet Scotch terrier.

After the war she did a season at London's Windmill Theatre and for ten months was Issy Bonn's 'discovery' singer in his touring revue 'The Big Broadcast of 1947'. She can be heard on some of his discs. Next came two years with Felix Mendelssohn's Hawaiian Serenaders, plus a spell with the Santa Salvades Rumba Band. During her time with Mendelssohn Beri sometimes took her pet duck on stage!

In 1950 she was touring in variety as a vocal duo with Paul Roussel and in 1955 was a member of Gracie Cole's all girl band. Other than that I don't know what happened to her.

## Lynne SHAW

Discovered by Stanley Black towards the end of the war, Lynne recorded and broadcast with Frank Weir before singing with Lou Preager's band at the Hammersmith Palais for almost two years. She then moved over to the Cricklewood Palais with Jan Wildeman's Band.

In 1949 she was broadcasting weekly with Reg Pursglove. She also aired with Robin Richmond and George Melachrino and appeared in two films, 'The Years Between' and 'Dancing with Crime'.

Gerry Didymus informed me that Lynne's short show- business career came to an abrupt end in 1950 when she died from a heart-attack on 7<sup>th</sup> September that year.

Lynne Shaw Recordings

DECCA (with Frank Weir's Astor Club Seven)

F 8501 Feb 45 'What a difference a day made / Together'  
 F 8522 Mar 45 'I'm making believe'

COLUMBIA (with Lou Preager Orchestra)

**Roland SHAW**

**Anne SHELTON**

With the ending of hostilities, in 1946 and 1947 Anne was again voted Britain's top female singer by 'Melody Maker'. She began touring in variety and regularly broadcast, partnering Ray Burns with the Ambrose Orchestra, from Ciro's Club. Anne also had a regular spot on Stanley Black's series 'With a Smile and a Song'. On Monday 15th March 1948 the BBC revived her war-time success with a new series now titled 'Introducing Anne Again', on which she was accompanied by her own pianist-arranger Johnny Franz and the BBC Revue Orchestra led by Frank Cantell. Producer was David Miller who was responsible for her original shows, and each week she introduced a new British song. On her birthday show on 10th November she invited her old war-time rival Vera Lynn along and they sang a duet together. Anne was regularly on the BBC's first popular song-chart series 'Hit Parade'. Broadcast from January 1949 it also featured singer Bruce Trent, The Song Pedlars and The Squadronaires (soon replaced by

Geraldo's Orchestra), playing and singing all the latest hits of the day.

Continuing to record with Decca she made a long list of highly successful numbers including an update to her wartime hit, 'The wedding of Lili Marlene'. Accompanying her on some of her late forties recordings was a quintet led by David Reid, an ex-naval man who she had met during the war. Now her manager, he much later became her husband.

Not only to British serviceman had Anne endeared herself, but also to many American G.I's who had served over here and took home memories of the Shelton voice. Sustained by a large number of her discs being released in the States (some only issued there) an American Billboard magazine poll in 1950 placed her No.8 on a list of top female vocalists. Two of her recordings 'Be mine' and 'Galway Bay' made the Top Thirty on the American charts. Not bad for an English girl who had never yet crossed the Atlantic.

But 1950 was the year Anne began to spread her wings beyond these shores. In May she was off on a six week tour of South Africa. This proved a great success, and borrowing her current theme song a Johannesburg newspaper headlined its praise "With a smile and a song Anne Shelton conquered".

In August, with fellow singer Monty Norman, comedian Gerry Martin and the Kathy Stobart Band she made a flying visit to Nuremberg, Germany. The round trip of 1,500 miles was just for three concerts at American service camps in the area. The group flew out on the 16th and back on the 18th.

A ten day U.S. visit in October took in 34 radio and TV shows on which she sang almost exclusively British songs, plus a recording sessions with members of the Jack Pleis Orchestra. Anne rounded her much travelled year with a visit, on the 1st November, to Paris for a radio broadcast over the French network. She aired over the BBC on Christmas morning in 'Sing It Again' with Lizbeth Webb, Dick James, Alan Dean, The Stargazers, The Hastings Girls Choir and Stanley Black's Orchestra.

During 1950 Anne also managed to fit in a small part, appearing in a night club scene, in the film 'Come Dance With Me', that had very little plot but included a number of variety artists.

With her popularity in America at its peak, Anne returned there in May 1951 and this time stayed eight months. During a busy schedule, making hundreds of radio and TV appearances, she did cabaret at the Flamingo Club in Las Vegas and New York's famous Copa Cobana night spot, the first British artist to appear there. She is reported as recording another eight songs during this visit, but only three appeared on disc back home, 'The world is mine tonight', 'All in the golden afternoon' and 'My concerto'.

Back in the U.K, 1952 was filled with a virtual non-stop tour of variety theatres, including two weeks at the London Palladium in March. A new radio series that year was 'Double Top', the "double top" being Anne and comedian Alfred Marks in a music and comedy show helped along by Stanley Black and the orchestra. Obviously her new status as a world wide traveller prompted Roy Plomley to invite her onto his desert island for the 150th edition of 'Desert Island Discs' on 20th August 1952.

All this time her solo output from Decca continued to grow, but in 1953 she decided to make a move over to the H.M.V. label, maybe with an eye

on the recently introduced record hit parade charts. She did get a more popular selection of numbers to record, songs like 'Answer me', 'Bridge of sighs', 'Cross over the bridge', 'If I give my heart to you', 'Teach me tonight', etc. But it was a long wait and her twelfth and last offering from that label that gave Anne her first chart success when she took 'Arrivederci darling', in a close contest with Edna Savage, to No.17 on the NME Top Twenty listing for the last week of 1955.

From March 1953 Anne was one of the crew aboard 'Pleasure Boat', a new Sunday evening radio series with Lee Lawrence and Julie Andrews, and in July she was back on a new series of 'Double Top' with the Bruce Campbell Orchestra replacing Stanley Black. Variety included a summer season with Jimmy Jewel & Ben Warriss at Great Yarmouth's Britannia Pier Pavilion, plus the honour of appearing on a Royal Variety Show at the London Coliseum on 2nd November.

The 1954 summer season found her in 'On With The Show' at Blackpool's North Pier with ventriloquist Terry Hall and The Hedley Ward Trio. A new radio series was 'Top Of The Town' with Terry-Thomas and the Woolf Phillips Orchestra. And so the fifties, for Anne, continued in much the same fashion. Summer season 1955 was at Blackpool's Palace Theatre, topping the bill with Billy Russell and Harold Berens.

In 1956 there was another change of recording label, to Philips, and a chart entry with her first release, 'Seven Days' making No.20 during April. Two discs later came Anne's greatest single success. 'Lay down your arms' another foreign tune, this time from Sweden (discovered by Johnny Franz, at the time A & R man at Philips), with English lyrics by Paddy Roberts it spent fourteen weeks on the charts, pushing Doris Day's 'Whatever will be' off No.1 towards the end of September. It then held the top spot for four weeks before Frankie Laine and 'A Woman in Love' took over. Two more from Philips were chart hits, 'The village of St. Bernadette' in 1959 and 'Sailor' in 1961. Her February 1963 recording 'My continental love' was one of the contenders for Britian's entry in that year's Eurovision Song Contest. In June 1963 Anne was presented with a gold disc for her 'Greensleeves' track on an UNO charity disc.

1957 brought two firsts for Anne, her first long player with more of a jazz flavour than her usual style, and her first series for Radio Luxembourg 'Anne Shelton's Song Parade', on Thursday evenings at nine.

With television now taking over from radio as the popular medium, Anne was often to be seen "on the box". She made several appearances on 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium' and other variety shows and in 1959 had her own 'Anne Shelton Show'. She made further appearances on the Royal Variety Show in June 1959, May 1960 and again in a "reviving the forties" feature in November 1978. The following year she sang 'I'll be seeing you' on the sound-track of the film 'Yanks', a story of the American G.I. in wartime Britain.

1961 saw the start of a major new Anne Shelton BBC TV series titled 'Ask Anne'. The 45 minute shows included film clips of members of the public requesting songs for Anne to sing on the programme. Guest stars on the first show seen on 30th April were Johnny Dankworth, Max Jaffa, The Avons and The Foursome.

In 1963 her wedding to David Reid ("my first and only boyfriend" she later disclosed) finally happened, a marriage that lasted until his death in 1990. Anne continued to perform and record well into the eighties. On 6th October 1964 she was on the last 'Workers Playtime', broadcast from a cardboard box factory (the format continued as 'Variety on Tour').

Always one to give much time and help to ex-servicemen's charities, in 1990 she was awarded an OBE for her activities on their behalf. Less than a week before her sudden death from a heart attack at home on Sunday 31 July 1994, she was again singing for the Not-Forgotten Veterans Association on a special concert at Buckingham Palace.

Such was Anne Shelton, never one to seek publicity, but always ready to use her God-given natural voice in the help of others. And despite her ample build she was a graceful and nimble mover and even in her later years could easily show newcomers a thing or two. A truly great singer and a grand lady.

Anne Shelton Recordings

H.M.V. (as Pat Sibley with Jack Hylton Orch)

BD 5023 Feb 36 'Why did she fall for the leader of the band  
(with Jack

Cooper)'

BD 5024 Feb 36 'Moanin' Minnie'

REX (most with Jay Wilbur Orch)

9841 Aug 40 'I can't love you anymore / Fools  
rush in'

9903 Jan 41 'I'm nobodys baby / Maybe'

9928 Feb 41 'Blueberry Hill / I don't want to cry  
anymore'

9954 Apl 41 'The last time I saw Paris / Down  
every street'

9984 May 41 'A pair of silver wings / Who am I'

10007 Jly 41 'There goes that song again / Love at last'

10029 Aug 41 'Beneath the lights of home /  
Forever and

a day'

10040 Sep 41 'It always rains before the rainbow /  
St. Mary's in the

twilight'

10068 Oct 41 'I spend my time remembering / Yours'

10089 Dec 41 'Wrap yourself in cotton wool /  
Kiss the boys

goodbye'

10104 Feb 42 'I'll be with you in apple blossom time /  
Some sunny

day'

10129 May 42 'Absent minded moon /  
This is no laughing

matter'

10142 Jly 42 'I'll just close my eyes / Blues in the night'

DECCA (AO = with Ambrose Orchestra)  
(SBO = with Stanley Black Orch)

F 7521 Jun 40 (AO) 'Begin the beguine'

F 7539 Jly 40 (AO) 'A nightingale sang in Berkeley  
Square'

F 7580 Aug 40 (AO) 'Fools rush in

F 7602 Sep 40 (AO) 'I'm stepping out with a memory  
tonight /

I'll never smile

again'

F 7648 Nov 40 (AO) 'I'll never make the same mistake  
again'

F 7649 Nov 40 (AO) 'Until you fall in love'

F 7671 Dec 40 (AO) 'Blueberry Hill / Maybe'

F 7673 Dec 40 (AO) 'Goodnight again'

F 7694 Jan 41 (AO) 'Yesterday's dream / Moon for sale'

F 7702 Jan 41 (AO) 'Five o'clock whistle'

F 7703 Jan 41 (AO) 'We three'

F 7705 Jan 41 (AO) 'You're breaking my heart all over  
again /

Oh! buddy, I'm in

love'

F 7729 Feb 41 (AO) 'I don't want to cry anymore /  
Johnny

peddler'

F 7730 Feb 41 (AO) 'My first lullaby /  
Ev'ry time I look

at you'

F 7741 Mar 41 (AO) 'Our love affair / Only forever'

F 7742 Mar 41 (AO) 'Room five-hundred-and-four /  
Waltzing in the

clouds'

F 7771 Mar 41 (AO) 'You say the sweetest things, baby /  
Something to remember

you by'

F 7791 Apl 41 (AO) 'When that man is dead and gone /  
Fr

enesi'

F 7828 Apl 41 (AO) 'I want my mama'

F 7847 May 41 (AO) 'Do I love you?'

F 7848 May 41 (AO) 'A little steeple pointing to a  
star'

F 7876 Jun 41 (AO) 'Yes, my darling daughter  
(with Doreen

Villiers)'

F 7877 Jun 41 (AO) 'A pair of silver wings'

F 7876 Jun 41 (AO) 'Let there be love (with Sam Browne)'

F 7881 Jly 41 (AO) 'How did he look'

F 7892 Jly 41 (AO) 'My yiddishe momme / St. Louis  
blues'

F 7902 Jly 41 (AO) 'There goes that song again /

I

understand'

F 7903 Jly 41 (AO) 'They met in Rio (with Sam Browne)'

F 7923 Aug 41 (AO) 'The things I love'

F 7924 Aug 41 (AO) 'Inside my wedding ring'

F 7933 Aug 41 (AO) 'Amapola'

F 7934 Aug 41 (AO) 'Minnie from Trinidad'

F 7935 Aug 41 (AO) 'Russian rose'

F 7936 Aug 41 (AO) 'Moonlight in Mexico'

F 7953 Sep 41 (AO) 'Daddy'

F 7965 Sep 41 (AO) 'All alone with my shadow /  
Hearts don't

lie'

F 7992 Oct 41 (AO) 'Green eyes (with Sam Browne)'

F 7993 Oct 41 (AO) 'While the music plays on / You and  
I'

F 8010 Nov 41 (AO) 'Lights out 'till reveille'

F 8011 Nov 41 (AO) 'The boogie woogie piggy'

F 8026 Dec 41 (AO) 'I don't want to set the world on fire /  
Kiss the boys

goodbye'

F 8027 Dec 41 (AO) 'It's a small world / You're in my  
arms'

F 8044 Jan 42 (AO) 'There's a land of begin again'

F 8045 Jan 42 (AO) 'I know why'

F 8047 Jan 42 (AO) 'That lovely weekend'

F 8055 Jan 42 (AO) 'When night is thru' / Concerto for  
two'

F 8113 May 42 (AO) 'Tomorrow's sunrise'

F 8114 May 42 (AO) 'How about you (with Sam  
Browne) /

He stole my heart

away'

F 8115 May 42 (AO) 'In the middle of a dance'

F 8121 Jun 42 (AO) 'I don't want to walk without you'

F 8122 Jun 42 (AO) 'How green was my valley'

F 8155 Jly 42 (AO) 'Humpty dumpty heart'

F 8156 Jly 42 (AO) 'Strange as it seems'

F 8176 Aug 42 (AO) 'I don't want to walk without you  
(re-

issue)'

F 8183 Sep 42 (AO) 'Always in my heart /  
Ev'rything I have is

yours'

F 8184 Sep 42 (AO) 'Sing me a song of the islands /

world'			Where in the	F 8430	Jun 44	(AO) 'Amor amor / I'll walk alone'
F 8192	Oct 42	(AO) 'Hey! Mabel'		F 8434	Jun 44	(SBO) 'Lilli Marlene / Tonight I kissed you'
F 8193	Oct 42	(AO) 'White Christmas'		F 8465	Jly 44	(AO) 'Till stars forget to shine / San Fernando
F 8214	Nov 42	(AO) 'South wind / Only you'				
F 8221	Nov 42	'Love is a song / You walk by'		valley'		
F 8242	Dec 42	(AO) 'My serenade / Nightingale'		F 8476	Oct 44	(AO) 'Swinging on a star'
F 8243	Dec 42	Why can't it happen to me / It costs so little'		F 8479	Oct 44	(SBO) 'I'll be seeing you / The echo of a
F 8245	Dec 42	(AO) 'A taxi driver's serenade'		serenade'		
F 8246	Jan 43	(AO) 'My devotion'		F 8480	Nov 44	(AO) 'Spring will be a little late this year'
F 8247	Jan 43	'At last / Constantly'		F 8488	Dec 44	(AO) 'It could happen to you / Love, here is my
F 8266	Feb 43	(AO) 'I just kissed your picture goodnight'		heart'		
F 8267	Feb 43	(AO) 'Ev'ry night about this time'		F 8493	Jan 45	(AO) 'Dance with a dolly'
F 8279	Mar 43	'That's the moon, my son /	Question and	F 8498	Feb 45	(AO) 'The trolley song / Some other time'
answer'				F 8510	Mar 45	(SBO) 'My beautiful Sarie Marais / That's an Irish
F 8282	Mar 43	(AO) 'Dearly beloved'		lullaby'		
F 8283	Mar 43	(AO) 'Somewhere over the hill'		F 8511	Mar 45	(AO) 'Can't help singing / More and
F 8291	Apl 43	'Can't get out of this mood /	There are such	more'		
things'				F 8538	Aug 45	(SBO) 'Pablo the dreamer / Laura'
F 8295	Apl 43	(AO) 'At the crossroads / Nain, nain'		F 8545	Aug 45	(AO) 'Anywhere / Serenade Frasquita'
F 8296	Apl 43	(AO) 'I dream of you'		F 8546	Aug 45	(AO) 'The wedding waltz / Robin Hood'
F 8306	May 43	(AO) 'Why don't you fall in love with me? /		F 8579	Feb 46	(AO) 'On the Atchison Topeks and the Santa Fe'
		There's a harbour of dream		F 8580	Feb 46	(AO) 'Manana'
boats'				F 8588	Mar 46	(SBO) 'Out of the night / Let's keep it that way'
F 8307	May 43	(AO) 'As time goes by'		F 8592	Mar 46	(AO) 'Life is nothing without music'
F 8313	Jun 43	(AO) 'Taking a chance on love / Darling'		F 8600	Feb 46	(SBO) 'Rose of Santa Luzia / Everybody knew
F 8314	Jun 43	(AO) 'The lady who didn't believe in love / Where's my		but me'		
love?'				F 8635	Jly 46	(with Phil Green Orch) 'Amado mio / I'll dance at your
F 8316	Jun 43	'You too can have a lovely romance / A fine how do you		wedding'		
do'				F 8678	Sep 46	(SBO) 'The boy that broke my heart / More than anything else in
F 8326	Jly 43	(AO) 'A fool with a dream / It's you that I love'		the world'		
F 8327	Jly 43	(AO) 'You'd be so nice to come home to / Better not roll those blue		F 8705	Nov 46	(SBO) 'Goodnight darling / One night in old
blue eyes'				Saville'		
F 8328	Aug 43	(AO) 'Coming in on a wing and a prayer / You'll never		F 8728	Feb 47	(SBO) 'Anniversary song / It all comes back to me
know'				now'		
F 8329	Aug 43	(AO) 'Don't get around much anymore / Johnny		F 8751	Apl 47	(SBO) 'I keep forgetting to remember / There's a new moon over the
Zero'				ocean'		
F 8330	Aug 43	'In the blue of the evening / When I look		F 8772	Jun 47	(with Bob Farnon Orch) 'A rainy night in Rio / Goodnight you little
at you'				rascal you'		
F 8343	Sep 43	(AO) 'If you please'		F 8842	Feb 48	(with Harry Roy Band) 'Down at the old bull and bush /
F 8344	Sep 43	(AO) 'You rhyme with everything that's beautiful / All or		Lover man'		
nothing at all'				F 8859	Mar 48	'What'll I do / Where flamingoes fly' (acc by
F 8351	Oct 43	(AO) 'Put your arms around me honey / Take it		Camarata Orch)		
from there'				F 8898	Jun 48	'Time may change / Be mine' (acc by Roy
music'				Robertson Orch)		
F 8358	Nov 43	(AO) 'We mustn't say goodbye / So long,		F 8907	Jun 48	You've changed (acc by Camarata Orch) / Galway bay (with The
Sarah Jane'				Wardour		
F 8378	Dec 43	(AO) 'He doesn't look much like a hero / Homeward				
bound'						Singers acc by
F 8388	Jan 44	(AO) 'It can't be wrong'		RRO'		
F 8389	Jan 44	(AO) 'I never mention your name'		F 8926	Jly 48	'The night has a thousand eyes / Strangers in the dark' (acc by
F 8397	Feb 44	(AO) 'Tenement symphony (two parts)'		Camarata Orch)		
F 8398	Feb 44	(AO) 'Someday soon / Paper doll'		F 8950	Sep 48	'October twilight / On the painted desert' (acc by Roy
F 8402	Feb 44	'Hold back the dawn / Not any more' (acc by Jay Wilbur		Robertson Orch)		
Orch)				F 8951	Aug 48	'The love of my life (acc by CO) / The woody woodpecker (with The Keynotes - effect by Alan Dean - acc by
F 8411	Apl 44	(AO) 'Take it easy / Blue Bahamas'		woodpecker		
F 8416	Apl 44	'Thanks for the dream / Don't ever leave me' (acc by Jay Wilbur		RRO')'		
Orch)						
F 8421	May 44	(AO) 'Journey's end'				
F 8422	May 44	(AO) 'Mairzy doats and dozy doats'				

F 8963	Sep 48	(with Sam Browne & The Keynotes) 'The law is comin' for ya, Paw / Say something sweet to your sweetheart'	F 9392	May 50	'Asthoreen bawn / Down by the glenside' <i>(acc by Roy Robertson Orch)</i>
F 8964	Sep 48	'Time out for tears (with The Keynotes) / A souvenir de Paree' <i>(acc by RRO)</i>	F 9393	May 50	'Music, music, music (rhythm acc) / In the chapel of San Remo <i>(acc by RRO)</i>
F 8974	Oct 48	'My silent love / Spring in December' <i>(acc CO)</i>	F 9428	Jun 50	'All my homeland (with George Mitchell Eight) / Festival of roses' <i>(acc by RRO)</i>
F 8982	Oct 48	'The Christmas spell / The Christmas song <i>(with The Wardour Singers)' (acc by RRO)</i>	F 9477	Sep 50	'I remember the cornfields <i>(acc by RRO)</i> / My love loves me <i>(acc by PFO)</i>
F 9005	Nov 48	'Abide with me / Away in a manger' <i>(with The George Mitchell Choir acc by Felton Rapley organ)</i>	F 9526	Oct 50	'Once in a while / If I were a blackbird'
F 9056	Jan 49	'Johnny get your girl (with The Keynotes) / Kiss me goodnight (with The Wardour Singers)' <i>(acc by Roy Robertson Orch)</i>	F 9537	Nov 50	'Only a moment ago / Land of sunshine'
F 9076	Feb 49	'While the Angelus was ringing (with TWS) / When the lilac blooms again' <i>(acc by RRO)</i>	F 9548	Nov 50	'After you've gone / I don't mind being all alone' <i>(recorded in US with section of Jack Pleis)</i>
F 9100	Feb 49	'The heart of Loch Lomond / If you ever fall in love again <i>(with TWS)' (acc by RRO)</i>	F 9551	Nov 50	'My Christmas wish / Merry Christmas'
F 9102	Mar 49	'Put your shoes on Lucy (with The Keynotes acc by clarinet & Hearts <i>(acc by Roy Robertson Orch)</i>	F 9552	Dec 50	'It's a marshmallow world / Take care of love'
F 9148	Jun 49	'The wedding of Lilli Marlene (with WS) / Hold me just a little closer dear' <i>(acc by Paul Fenoulhet Orch)</i>	F 9563	Dec 50	<i>(with Dick James)</i> 'The petite waltz <i>(with Anton Karas zither)</i> / If we met for the first time'
F 9153	Jun 49	'It happened Adano / Humble people' <i>(acc by Paul Fenoulhet Orch)</i>	F 9593	Jan 51	'Music by the angels / Some of these days' <i>(recorded in US with section of Jack Pleis)</i>
F 9180	Jly 49	'All is lost <i>(acc by Roy Robertson Orch)</i> / Johnny Bach <i>(acc by Paul Fenoulhet Orch)</i>	F 9622	Mar 51	'Come back to Angouleme / Love me my love'
F 9197	Oct 49	'My yiddishe momme / Eili Eili' <i>(acc by RRO)</i> <i>(recorded Jly 47)</i>	F 9664	May 51	'Mademoiselle de Paris / I will never change' <i>(with The George Mitchell Choir acc by Bob Farnon)</i>
F 9203	Aug 49	'Ring around the moon / What did I do' <i>(with Ted Heath Music) (recorded Apl 48)</i>	F 9692	Jun 51	'The loveliest night of the year / Yes you were right <i>(with The Johnston Bros)</i>
F 9211	Sep 49	'I get sentimental over nothing / The hours I spend with you' <i>(with Paul Fenoulhet Orch)</i>	F 9704	Jly 51	'Don't misunderstand / Hollywood square dance <i>(with The Honeycombs)</i>
F 9231	Oct 49	'Melancholy minstrel <i>(acc by RRO)</i> / Twilight <i>(with George Mitchell Choir acc by PFO)</i>	F 9769	Oct 51	'The world is mine tonight / All in the golden afternoon' <i>(recorded in US)</i>
F 9257	Nov 49	'A kiss in the dark <i>(with The Wardour Singers)</i> / Because you love me' <i>(acc by RRO)</i>	F 9850	Feb 52	'My concerto <i>(recorded in US)</i> / Ay Marie <i>(with The Keynotes)</i>
F 9283	Dec 49	'The velvet touch <i>(with TWS)</i> / Go now' <i>(acc by Roy Robertson Orch)</i>	F 9917	May 52	<i>(with Stanley Black Orch)</i> 'Kiss of fire / Body and soul'
F 9327	Feb 50	'Oh my darling <i>(acc by Camarta Orch)</i> <i>(rec Nov 47)</i> / Without that certain thing <i>(with The Keynotes acc by David Reid Quintet)</i>	F 9932	Jun 52	<i>(SBO)</i> 'Lilli Marlene melody / And the angels sing'
F 9342	Feb 50	'Give me your hand / When the heather gleams like stardust' <i>(acc by RRO)</i>	F 9941	Jun 52	<i>(SBO)</i> 'And so I waited around / That's the chance you take'
			F 9962	Jly 52	<i>(SBO)</i> 'Bella musica / Santa Maria'
			F 9994	Oct 52	'The Isle of Innisfree <i>(SBO)</i> / Little drops of water'
			F 10001	Nov 52	'The wallflower waltz / The continental waltz'
			F 10013	Nov 52	<i>(with Ted Heath Music)</i> 'Wonderful one / The dummy song'
			F 10037	Jan 53	<i>(SBO)</i> 'Hold back the dawn / I shall return'
			F 10048	Feb 53	<i>(with Edmundo Ros Orch)</i> 'The moth and the flame / Take a chance'

F 10061 Feb 53	(SBO)	'I'm praying to St.Christopher / Let me this day'	PB 969 Nov 59	'The village of St. Bernadette / You're not living in vain'
F 10105 May 53		'I talk to the trees / Auld lang syne forever'	PB 994 Feb 60	'The angels lullaby / Where can I go'
F 10121 Jun 53		'Hank Janson blues / I ain't got nobody' (acc by Johnny Franz)	PB 1042 Jly 60	'Papa loves mambo / Come back again'
Orch)			PB 1096 Jan 61	'Sailor / Souvenir of Ireland'
H.M.V.			PB 1110 Mar 61	'I will light a candle / Don't forget'
B 10547 Aug 53		'Tobermory bay / The kissing tree' (acc by George Melachrino)	PB 1165 Jly 61	'Adios my love / Don't forget'
Orch)			PB 1215 61	'Nein, nein frauliein / It's you'
B 10577 Sep 53		If you've never been in love / For you, for me'	326530 62	'I understand / Rome (wasn't built in a day)'
Orch)		(acc by Frank Cordell)	326558 62	'Tell me again in the morning / Come back my love'
B 10596 Oct 53		'Answer me / The bridge of sighs' ( with the George Mitchell Choir acc	326571 Feb 63	'The end of the world / My continental love'
FCO)			BF 1258 63	'Where were you when I needed you / How green was my valley'
B 10628 Jan 54		'Don't leave now / Crystal ball' (acc by FCO)	BF 1302 64	'Dancing with tears in my eyes / Tonights my night'
B 10641 Feb 54		'The book / Why does it have to be me' (with the George Mitchell Choir acc by Frank Cordell	BF 1344 64	'I don't want to walk without you / I cried for you'
Orch)			BF 1374 64	'Softly beat the drum / Danny Boy'
B 10680 Apl 54		'Cross over the bridge / Oh baby mine, I get so lonely' (with The Kordites acc by Ken Maxckintosh	BF 1464 65	'The carnival is closed today / The sound of summer'
Orch)			BUENA VISTA	
B 10732 Jly 54		'Love him so much I could scream / Juke box rag' (acc by Geoff Love	DF 476 70	'It won't be long till Christmas / The Christmas star'
Orch)			DECCA	
B 10745 Sep 54		'If I give my heart to you / Goodnight, well it's time to go' (acc by Ken Maxckintosh	F 13124 Jan 71	'No way to go but up / Mia cara, mia amore'
Orch)			PHILIPS	
B 10789 Dec 54		'Song of the barefoot Contessa (acc by Frank Cordell Orch)/ Teach me tonight (acc by Geoff Love	6006434 Nov 74	'My one and only love / Forever'
Orch)			PYE	
B 10857 Apl 55		'If we all said a prayer / Don't say goodbye' (acc by Reg Owen	7N46041 Jan 78	'How can we be sure / Back to the land'
Orch)			Jo SHELTON	
B 10878 Jun 55		'What have they told you / I remember Mama' (acc by Reg Owen	For years Josie accompanied big sister Anne around the country, keeping well in the background, but always harbouring a wish to sing herself. So in 1958 Anne decided to include Jo in a couple of duets on her stage act. They rehearsed a popular song of the day 'Love me forever' and Jo's first appearance was planned for the end of February at Newcastle Empire. Unfortunately she was so nervous she hardly ventured onto the stage. By the following week at Birmingham Empire she had just about mastered her stage fright and was able to join Anne at the microphone. During the following eight weeks in variety and a ten week summer season at Southsea that was all she did, other than a change of song to 'Friendship'. But it did get her some TV appearances, the first on ITV's 'Music Shop' on Sunday 9th November 1958 and then the 'Benny Hill Show' and 'Sunday Night at the Prince of Wales'. During 1959 she was a regular guest on Cyril Stapleton's 'The Melody Dances' and appeared on Jack Payne's 'Words and Music'. In May Top Rank issued her first record 'More and more romancing', on which she was described as having "a soft warm sincere approach to a ballad similar to sister Anne"	
Orch)				
POP 146 Dec 55		'Arrivederci darling / Song of the trees' (acc by Geoff Love		
Orch)				
PHILIPS		(acc by Wally Stott orch on most)		
PB 437 May 56		'Too young to go steady / The Madonna in blue'		
PB 567 Mar 56		'Seven days / The great pretender'		
PB 616 Aug 56		'Lay down your arms / Daydreams'		
PB 641 Nov 56		'Harbour bells / I'll be near to you'		
PB 661 Jan 57		'A man on the march / Give her my love'		
PB 679 Apl 57		'Absent friends / Seven stages of man'		
PB 726 Aug 57		'Three roads / Souvenir d'Italie'		
PB 772 Dec 57		'I hear that song again / I'll remember today'		
PB 779 Jan 58		'Ha! Ha! Ha! / Until they sail'		
PB 815 Mar 58		'The girl he left behind / Sail along silv'ry moon'		
PB 852 Aug 58		'Volare / Do you love me like you kiss me'		
PB 878 Nov 58		'Hurry home / I.T.A.L.Y. - I trust and love you'		
PB 920 Apl 59		'Just love me / Could I love you more'		
PB 956 Sep 59		'Now hear this / To love and be loved'		



Later in the year the BBC gave her her own short radio series and she continued to be seen on television with Ken Mackintosh on 'Flying Standards' and George Melachrino on his Sunday 'Melody Hour' series.

By the sixties she appears to have retreated back into the shadows.

Jo Shelton Recordings

TOP RANK

JAR 124 May 59 'More and more / Tread softly'  
JAR 245 Nov 59 'If there are stars in my eyes /  
I need your arms  
around me'

## Bill SHEPHERD

Founder of The Coronets vocal group, Bill came into show business later in life than many of his contemporaries. A Londoner, born around 1927, he began his working life as a trainee architect but soon found himself a member of the R.A.F. It was during his service days that he discovered an interest in music.

On demob he decided to take up journalism and got a job on a Fleet Street sports paper, but after an argument with the editor was soon out of work again. The next venture was as an entertainments organizer at a Jersey holiday camp, a sort of 'red-coat'. This whetted his appetite for show-business even more and when the season was over he auditioned for and joined the George Mitchell Choir.

In Coronation year 1953 Bill and four other members of the choir decided to branch out on their own, so under his leadership (he did all the arrangements) they formed The Coronets. Never as successful as some other fifties vocal groups, despite them being hailed by many as the best of the lot, the group nevertheless enjoyed a good run and lasted until 1959.

By then Bill was already arranging for other performers and was musical director for Pye Records. It was on that label that he produced a number of singles and albums by the Bill Shepherd Orchestra and Chorus. He even formed a new group, at the request of Norrie Paramor, for some recording sessions backing Columbia artists. On the same label The Shepherd Boys comprised Bill with Ross Gilmore and Michael Sammes, both from the Coronets, and Fred Lucas who had been a member of the George Mitchell Singers and the short lived Lucky Stars.

The John Warren Strict Tempo Orchestra and Combo, that recorded on Pye, is very likely a Bill Shepherd led outfit.

Bill Shepherd Recordings

COLUMBIA

DB 3720 Feb 56 (*The Bill Shepherd Chorus with  
The Big Ben Banjo  
Band*)  
'Love plays the strings of my  
banjo'  
DB 3737 Mar 56 (*The Bill Shepherd Chorus with Ken  
Kirkham*)  
'It's almost  
tomorrow'  
DB 3738 Mar 56 (*The Bill Shepherd Chorus with Tony  
Brent*)  
'Pick yourself  
a star'

DB 3765 May 56 (*The Bill Shepherd Chorus with The Big  
Ben*)

Banjo Band)

'Annaliesa'  
DB 3775 Jun 56 (*The Bill Shepherd Chorus with Jimmy  
Parkinson*) 'Walk hand in hand /

Cry baby'  
DB 3783 Jun 56 (*The Four Shepherd Boys with Michael  
Holliday*) 'The gal with the yaller  
shoes /

Hot

diggity'  
DB 3793 Jly 56 (*The Shepherd Boys and Girls*) 'Teenage  
love /

Little girls and

boys'  
DB 3816 Oct 56 (*The Shepherd Boys*) 'Song for a summer  
night

/ Summer

sweetheart'

PYE (*Bill Shepherd Orch*)

N 15137 Apl 58 'Big guitar / Tequila'  
N 15180 Dec 58 'The Inn of the Sixth Happiness' (one side  
only)  
N 15214 Aug 59 'What a difference a day made / Stardust'  
N 15265 May 60 'Standing on the corner / Lily of Laguna'  
N 15348 Mar 61 'Zing! went the strings of my heart /

Heartst

rings'

PYE INTERNATIONAL (*Bill Shepherd Orch*)

7N25069 Mar 61 (*with Lorie Mann*) 'Happy feet / The  
buskers'  
7N25072 Mar 61 (*with Davy Jones*) 'Scarlet woman /  
Model girl'  
7N25076 Apl 61 (*with Dave King*) 'Young in love /  
C'est la vie'

ISLAND (*Bill Shepherd Sound*)

WIP 6013 67 'March of the seven seas / Whistling  
sailor'

## Pauline SHEPHERD

As a young lady, from a council flat in Highbury, North London, Pauline was always very confident of her future. When just a 15 year old in 1954 she sent her photo to the pop weekly 'Record Mirror' with a letter informing them she intended to be a show business star and giving them the opportunity of being the first to interview her.

Her cheek paid off, for early in 1955 she made her first broadcast, on a Radio Luxembourg programme sponsored by 'Record Mirror', interviewing Alma Cogan. Next followed a chance to sing at a charity performance and on Monday 28th February 1955 an appearance on BBC television's 'Quite Contrary' (the show that launched Joan Regan and Ruby Murray). More radio of the likes of 'Midday Music Hall' and TV appearances on the Harry Secombe and Jack Jackson shows gave Pauline more exposure.

The new Pye Nixa record label signed her up and in September 1955 she became their very first release singing 'Have you ever been lonely'. Over the following 18 months she made a further three singles for Pye, before moving to Columbia where she only appears to have made just the one. None of her recordings, although pleasant, ever made chart success.

Her debut on the variety stage came on 24th February 1958 at London's Metropolitan Theatre

and in April a tour of Germany where she sang with Ted Heath's Music. Pauline now a pretty 5ft 2in. 19 year old had lost none of her earlier ambition adding to her singing work, modelling including TV advertisements, and writing a weekly fashion and make up column for a girl's magazine. Her stated hope was to become a jazz singer and all round entertainer. From June 1958 she hosted a new ITV quiz series 'Turnabout', but was still seeking that big record to make her a star.

In January 1959 a new Sandy Wilson musical 'Valmouth' was due to open at the Saville Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue, following a try out at Hammersmith's Lyric Theatre. Maxine Daniels had been cast in the try out run, but due to other commitments was unable to open in the West End. The part was given to Pauline and for weeks she rehearsed hard for this her first big show only to suffer probably her greatest disappointment falling ill with tonsillitis on the eve of opening night. Her understudy Denise Hirst took over the part when Pauline was ordered to rest by her doctor.

Consolation was a small part in the 1959 Arthur Askey film 'Friends and Neighbours', appearing in a coffee bar scene. The same year she had a bigger part, as Sylvia who runs a ballet school but gets mixed up with some crooks, in 'Operation Cupid'. In the film she sings 'Take your time' a song she wrote herself.

With no new record contract, she refused to sing rock and roll numbers, Pauline gave up singing in favour of an acting career and in 1961 was playing a typical teenager in AR-TV's daily serial 'Home Tonight'.

Pauline had at least one faithful fan. There is a letter in a March 1962 'Melody Maker' from a Dutch reader asking "What has happened to the singer Pauline Shepherd?" - I didn't find an answer.

#### Pauline Shepherd Recordings

##### PYE NIXA

N 15000 Sep 55 'Have you ever been lonely /  
Don't cry little  
donkey'  
N 15043 Mar 56 'Willie can / No not much'  
N 15064 Jly 56 'Treasure of love / Come back my love'  
N 15084 Feb 57 'The wisdom of a fool /  
By you ,by you, by  
you'  
N 15095 Jly 57 'Summer love / One'

##### COLUMBIA

DB 4019 Nov 57 'Love me to pieces / Just between you and  
me'

## Tony SHERIDAN

Probably Tony's biggest claim to fame is that The Beatles were his backing group on a 1960 recording session in Germany. Anthony Esmond Sheridan McGuinnity, born 1941, was a rocker and guitarist of some note, although his early background hardly forecast this. From Norwich, he played violin in his school orchestra and joined his mother, a keen singer, on some Gilbert and Sullivan concerts.

In 1958, now a fluffy haired 16 year old, he was studying commercial art while playing with the local Saints Skiffle Group in his spare time. Like all keen tea-chest pluckers and guitar twangers of the time

The Saints had heard of their Mecca, The Two I's coffee bar in London. So off they set to try their luck in the big city, playing a couple of sessions in that holy of holy places.

When the rest of the band returned to Norwich, two members, Kenny Packwood (who joined Marty Wilde's Wildcats) and Tony remained in London. Tony continued as a solo, working in a brewery by day, playing coffee bars at night. Then he got a six month tour in a package topped by Vince Eager, and some cabaret at clubs including Churchills. His style was very much 'Buddy Holly' and with his backing group The Wreckers (that for a time included Brian 'Liquorice' Locking on bass and a driving drummer Jimmy Nicholl) he was being noticed.

Tony is reported as being the first artist to be signed by the new Top Rank label, but no issue known. He appeared on ITV's 'Oh Boy' teen shows and was one of the few artists they allowed to play guitar on air. Most singers just pretended while some competent, out of sight, musician actually played, but Tony was good, having memorised all the solos from current rock discs. He used this talent backing other singers and was a member of The Playboys, Vince Taylor's backing group.

During the summer of 1960 Sheridan undertook some bookings in Germany - at that time rock and roll at home was regarded as almost finished and many rockers were looking overseas for work. On the same package were five young, very raw, musicians from Liverpool. They were The Beatles (at that time John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Stuart Sutcliffe and Pete Best) and they certainly looked up to the talented and, in their eyes, sophisticated solo act of Tony Sheridan. A recording was made by Polydor of Sheridan backed by The Beatles but it didn't surface in Britain until almost two years later.

#### Tony Sheridan Recordings

##### POLYDOR

*(Tony Sheridan and The Beatles)*

NH 66833 Jan 62 'My bonnie / The saints'  
NH 52275 Feb 64 Why (can't you love me again) /  
*(Beatles on NH 52317 May 64 'If you love me baby /  
reverse)*

*(Tony Sheridan and Bobby Patrick Six)*

NH 52315 64 'Will you still love me tomorrow /  
Jambalaya'

*(Tony Sheridan)*

NH52927 64 'Skinny Minnie / You'd better move  
on'

##### BUK

BU 3026 Nov 75 'If she'd have stayed / Lonely'

## Joyce SHOCK

Joyce was Frankie Vaughan's wife Stella's sister. She began performing at a Leeds youth club when she was 12 and sang on several charity shows. In 1953 she became Frankie's secretary and in 1957, now aged 20, Joyce made her professional debut at the Margate Winter Gardens on 16th September. On the last day of November she appeared on BBC TV's 'Six Five Special' and during December was on ITV's 'Lunch Box' daily for a whole week. Reports

described her as a very confident singer with a style similar to Dorothy Squires.

From Monday 28th April 1958 Joyce played her first week on the London variety circuit, at The Metropolitan in Edgware Road with Bruce Forsyth and The King Brothers. This was the beginning of a country wide variety tour.

Philips Records had already released her first single 'Bells in my heart' and over the next couple of years followed up with four more, and this seems to be her complete record output.

On her 21st birthday, the 17th August 1958, she celebrated by appearing on Bernard Delfont's prestige ITV show from the Prince of Wales Theatre. She had joined brother-in-law Frankie on his ITV show on 22 June and was on 'Music Shop' on 19th October.

Her October 1958 disc 'Hoopla hula' reflected the current craze for hula hoops, not just for kids but plenty of adults as well. Joyce became very much associated with the fad and attended many hula hoop contests around the country.

After her round of music halls at home she was off early in 1959 touring service camps in Cyprus, Malta and North Africa. It was similar tours and club work in Britain that kept her busy into the sixties. One diversion was pantomime in 'Dick Whittington' at the Oxford New Theatre in 1961.

#### Joyce Shock Recordings

##### PHILIPS

PB 780	Jan 58	'Bells in my heart / Pit a patter boom boom'
PB 824	Apl 58	'Take your foot from the door / I've got a bell on my heart'
PB 872	Oct 58	'Hoopla hula / You're not losing a daughter mama'
PB 934	May 59	'I can't love you anymore / Personality'
PB 957	Sep 59	'Cry, baby, cry / Dear diary'

## Victor SILVESTER

The time 9.35pm, the date 26th April 1937, the radio announcer says "This is the National Programme, Dancing Time with Victor Silvester and his Ballroom Orchestra" and so began what was to become an institution on British radio and television.

Born on 25th February 1900, the second son of the vicar of Wembley parish church, Victor was educated at John Lyons School and St. John's, Leatherhead. Aged fourteen at the outbreak of World War One, he ran away from home and joined the army by lying about his age.

Serving in the front line, he witnessed at first hand the atrocities of the war. Many of his colleagues, suffering from shell shock or total fear and unable to fight, were classed as cowards and shot by their own side. Victor, as a punishment for some misdemeanour, was put on one of these firing squads and the shock of the experience led to him breaking down, to the extent he himself was put on the death list. It was only the last minute realisation by the authorities that he had joined under-age, and shouldn't really be there, that saved him. He was medically discharged and later awarded the Italian bronze medal for valour.

Back in London after the war, he became a professional dance partner at Harold's tea dances,

employed to partner single ladies at £1 a week. From this humble beginning Victor, in 1922, with his partner Phyllis Clarke won the World Ballroom Dancing Championship. This was just three days after his marriage to one of C.B.Cochran's young ladies, Dorothy Newton.

With Dorothy he opened a dancing school. Initially in Maddox Street, London they later moved up-market to Bond Street. Over the years many celebrities learnt the subtle art of ballroom dancing from Victor and his staff. During a long illness in 1927 he wrote his world wide best selling book of ballroom dance tuition, still sought after today. Also a skilled pianist he later published a piano tutor.

Aware of the lack of suitable recorded music available for teaching, he approached several record companies and finally persuaded Parlophone to issue a series of strict tempo recordings. These were originally piano solo's by Gerry Moore, but sold so well Victor agreed with Parlophone to assemble a small orchestra for the same purpose. In October 1935 the first four titles, including what was to become his signature tune 'You're dancing on my heart', were available.

The Victor Silvester Dance Orchestra easily moved into radio and this happened, as previously mentioned, on 26th April 1937. The first tune they played on air was 'Ida sweet as apple cider', hardly a tune one would consider suitable for strict tempo treatment.

On the outbreak of World War Two Victor closed his dancing school to concentrate on radio and recording. Singles, now on the Columbia label, were issued at the rate of two or three a month throughout the war years and continued (less regularly) till the mid-sixties.

In 1941 he began his radio 'Dancing Club' giving dancing lessons over the air. Later 'Music for Dancing' became a well known and well loved programme on the Overseas Service, where it ran for 28 years.

Always ready to adapt his music to current trends Victor over the years introduced lush recordings from his Silver Strings, Latin American style and to satisfy the wartime G.I. influence his Jive Band, without ever losing his strict tempo format. This was the secret of his success, the listener always knew what to expect and was never disappointed.

At 8.30pm on 27th January 1948 'Dancing Club' made its debut on television and became one of TV's institutions, continuing for 17 years. While Victor demonstrated the magic way to ballroom dancing, his music was expertly dispensed by his orchestra who, in 1948, were Oscar Grasso on violin, E.O. 'Poggy' Pogson alto sax, either Ernie Wilson, Eddie Macauley or Cecil Norman on pianos, Vic Parker accordion, Bob Roberts bass and Ben Edwards drums.

During the fifties there was hardly a hit parade tune that didn't get the Silvester treatment and by the end of that decade well over twenty million singles had been sold, plus numerous long players. Victor probably sold more records than almost any other artist in the world, but virtually none of them ever had a vocal.

Many of the Latin American tunes the band recorded were Victor's own compositions, often in collaboration with his pianist Ernest Wilson, who had been with him at the beginning and was still

there twenty years later, as were violinist Oscar Grasso and drummer Ben Edwards.

The orchestra occasionally did live ballroom work and for a while in the early fifties were at Hammersmith Palais every Monday night.

In 1957 Victor signed a contract with the Rank Organization for the creation of Victor Silvester Schools of Ballroom Dancing at selected Odeon and Gaumont cinemas, and in March 1958 opened the 15th at the Brighton Regent. Rank's stated aim was to open 200 schools around the country. I'm not sure if they ever made it.

In January 1958 TV Dancing Club celebrated its 10th anniversary and three months later, on 26th April, the BBC celebrated Victor's twenty-one years on radio with 'The Victor Silvester Story'. The same year the orchestra featured in a Dancing Time sequence on the Royal Variety Performance at the London Coliseum.

In 1961 Victor was awarded the OBE for services to ballroom dancing. Even when the single record output dried up in the mid-sixties, he continued to broadcast and lead the orchestra for another ten years before handing over to his son Victor Junior, who waltzed in his father's footsteps through to the nineties. Victor Silvester junior had been with the BBC Recorded Programme department before the war, where he served with the Hampshire Regiment becoming second-in-command of British Forces Network in Northern Italy. After the war Victor jnr. ran the business side of the outfit at the Silvester-Grasso Productions agency.

Victor died in the South of France on 14th August 1978. No man has done more for ballroom dancing and the enjoyment of dancers and listeners alike.

*As the singles from 1945 on alone run into several hundred,  
I have not yet attempted to list them,  
Maybe one day!*

## Jack SIMPSON

A true cockney born on the 6th September 1905, Jack was a master of percussion instruments playing drums, xylophone marimba and guitar. A boy soldier, joining at 14, in 1920 he became the youngest mounted drummer in the British Army, appearing at both Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace.

Jack studied tympani drums under Dr. Lee at Eton School for four years, while assisting on their teaching staff. He then joined the dance band profession playing in the band of Percival Mackey. In 1933 he moved to Jack Payne, and had spells with Sydney Kyte, Ambrose and Sydney Lipton.

He formed his own Sextet in 1940 and began making records in April 1941 on the Rex label. During the second war the Sextet were hardly ever off the radio, doing about 15 broadcasts every week. This was a trend that continued during the later forties. The Jack Simpson Sextet possibly played on more 'Music While You Work' programmes than any other band, plus their own 'Sweet and Swing' series that ran for two years.

Recording output on Rex and Decca MW (Music While You Work series - mostly instrumental medleys labelled as by Jack Simpson and the Freedom Boys) continued steadily during the war years. Due to wartime demand on manpower the

line up of his group varied considerably over these years, but one who appears to have stayed the course better than most was guitarist Ivor Mairants. Many of the vocals were provided by Maureen Morton. In 1945 Jack moved to Parlophone Records and continued to record until about 1950.

During the late forties and early fifties as well as his radio work Jack toured extensively in variety, originally with the Sextet but later as a solo xylophone act. In 1952 he was on a touring bill with Danny Kaye. He spent over a year touring Europe.

In 1954 Jack went over to America for a season of bookings and obviously enjoyed life there. Although he came back, doing further variety work including the 1956 summer season at Brighton Hippodrome in 'Light Up the Town' with Audrey Jeans, Reg Dixon and Tommy Fields, he emigrated to the States in the early sixties.

Jack continued his successful career in America and died there on 7th May 1977.

### Jack Simpson Sextet Recordings (*not complete*) REX

9979	Apl 41	'St. Louis blues / I got rhythm (v. Betty Kent)
10003	May 41	'Ida sweet as apple cider / Oh lady be good' (both v. B. Kent)
10045	41	'Honeysuckle rose / Stay out of the south' (both v. Betty Kent)
10022	Jly 41	'Oasis / Rise and shine (v. Betty Kent)
10064	Aug 41	'Miss Annabelle Lee / Sing you sinners' (BK)
10071	Oct 41	'Mirage / The boogie woogie piggy (V. BK)
10094	Dec 41	'I know a secret / Soft shoe shuffle' (both v. BK)
10103	Feb 42	'Stage coach / Chattanooga choo choo (v. BK)
10132	May 42	'Watch the birdie / Hoe down' (both v. Betty Kent)
10144	Aug 42	'Jersey bounce / Pennsylvania polka' (both v. BK)
10159	42	'Night flight / Idaho (v. Betty Kent)
10161		'Desert patrol / ?'
10162	Nov 42	'The sleep song / Don't do it darling' (both v. BK)
10165	Dec 42	'Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition / I've got a gal in Kalamazoo' (both v. Betty Kent)
10166	Dec 42	'I mean you / Let's sing a gay little spring song' (both v. Betty Kent)
10169		'Safari / ?'
10170	43	'Bow Bells swinging the Broadway melody / Johnny and Mary' (both v. Betty Kent)
10178	Apl 43	'Shoe shine gal / A touch of Texas' (both v. BK)
10182	Jun 43	'Swing shoe shop / I've got you before my eyes' (both v. Mindy Jackson)
10197		'Vilia (v. Betty Kent & Mervyn Saunders) / Chiselin'
10203	Apl 44	'Padacuh / Sitting on a cloud' (both v. Betty Kent)
10209	44	'You're the cream in my coffee / Everybody loves my baby' (both v. Betty Kent - recorded Nov 41)

10232 / Cockles	44	'My sweetie went away ( <i>recorded Jly 41</i> ) and mussels ( <i>recorded May 42</i> )' (both	/	Nashville nightingale - Lady be good'
<i>v. Betty Kent</i> )			heart -	[Wizard of Oz Selection] 'If I only had a
12204 eyes		'Swing shoe shop / I've got you before my	the wizard'	Over the rainbow - We're off to see
<i>Mindy Jakson</i> )		( <i>v.</i>	MW 133 heartache	43 [Hit Parade Selection] 'Was it rain - Sweet
DECCA		( <i>Jack Simpson Freedom Boys</i> )	you' /	- Love is good for anything that ails
F 8238 had a	42	[Talkie Hits Revival Medley No.1 & 2] 'If I	your heart on	[East Side of Heaven Selection] 'Hang
Sunny side		talking picture of you - I'm a dreamer -	heaven -	a Hickory limb - East side of
meant for me -		up / Broadway melody - You were	sunbeams'	Sing a song of
<i>as MW 5</i> )		Singing in the rain' ( <i>also issued</i>	MW 134 call it love	43 [Sing You Sinners Selection] 'Laugh and
F 8258 he's making	42	'Coal black mammy - My mammy - Ma	got a pocket	- Don't let that moon get away - I've
Moonlight and roses		eyes at me / Ain't she sweet -	dreams' /	full of
<i>MW 10</i> )		- Limehouse blues' ( <i>also issued as</i>	moon got in my	[Double Or Nothing Selection] 'The
F 8299 'That's you	43	[Talkie Hits Revival Medley No.3 & 4]	thing to do'	eyes - All you want to do is dance -
Breakaway / Whistle		baby - Walking with Susie -	MW 156 the boys	It's the natural
will come -		while you work - Someday my prince	never let	43 [Kiss the Boys Goodbye Selection] 'Kiss
<i>MW 16</i> )		Heigh ho' ( <i>also issued as</i>	pass by' /	goodbye - Send in my shoes - I'll
MW 21 through	43	[Talkie Hits Revival Medley No.5] 'Tip-toe	- I used to be	a day
Painting the clouds		the tulips - In a kitchenette -	music'	[Carefree Selection] 'Change partners
'Mean to me -		with sunshine' /	MW 157 hap-happy	colour blind - The night is filled with
blues'		[Popular Hits Revival Medley No.7]	together now' /	43 [Gulliver's Travels Selection] 'It's a hap-
MW 32 eyes on you	43	Miss Annabell Lee - The birth of the	thy neighbour	day - Faithful forever - We're all
heaven -		- Begin the beguine' /	May I'	[We're Not Dressing Selection] 'Love
MW 33 - When	43	[Pennies from Heaven] 'Pennies from	MW 225 the	- Goodnight lovely little lady -
dee' /		So do I - One two button your shoe'	Lullaby of	43 [Gold Diggers of 1933 Selection] 'We're in
your eyes -		[Pinocchio Selection] 'Give a little whistle	way' /	money - I've got to sing a torch song -
won't dance'		you wish upon a star - Hi-diddle-de-	[Forty Second Street Selection] '42 <sup>nd</sup>	Broad
MW 76 tonight -	43	[Roberta Selection] 'Smoke gets in	Street - Young	way' /
still of the night		Lovely to look at - I	MW 226 a lovely	[Top Hat Selection] 'No strings - Isn't this
knows'		Pick yourself up - A fine romance' /	white tie and tails	day - Cheek to cheek / Top hat
MW 77 Where	43	[Rosalie Selection] 'Rosalie - In the	piccolino'	- The
a tramp' /		- Who	MW 227 music -	44 [Say it with Music Selection] 'Say it with
putting all my eggs		[Babes in Arms Selection] 'Good morning -	best to make	Love is the sweetest thing - I'll do my
saw the sea'		or when - The lady is	'You are my	you happy' /
MW 107 love -	43	[Follow the Fleet Selection] 'I'm	got a feeling	[Broadway Melody of 1936 Selection]
danger in		in one basket - Let yourself go - We	star'	lucky star - Broadway rhythm - I've
Ritz'		Tropical magic - The Nango' /	MW 239 That's my	you're fooling - You are my lucky
MW 108 rhythm -	43	[Puttin' on the Ritz Selection] 'There's	red robin	44 [Old Pops Medley No.1] 'White lies -
		your eyes - With you - Puttin' on the	do is dream	weakness now - Shanghai' /
		[Lady Be Good Selection] 'Fascinating		[Old Pops Medley No.2] 'When the red
				comes a bob bob bobbin' along - All I
				of you - Bye bye blackbird'

MW 228	44	[Whoopee Selection] 'My baby just cares for me - A	F 2197	Jan 47	'The charm of the waltz : Let the rest of the
		girl friend of a boy friend of mine' / [Broadway Melody of 1938 Selection]			world go by / Mighty lak a rose /
'You made		me love you - I'm feelin' like a million	Always /		The anniversary waltz / I'll see
- Your		Broadway and my Broadway - You made	you again'		
me love you'			F 2203	Feb 47	'If I wasn't in your dream last night, dream again
MW 289	44	[Mad About Music Selection] 'I love to whistle -			/ Accordion (both v. Maureen Morton)'
		Chapel bells - Serenade to the stars'	F 2216	May 47	'Dish me a dish (v. Maureen Morton) / Sockin' the minor (both feature the Challen
/		[Down Argentine Way Selection] 'Two dreams met -			Multitone piano)
		Down Argentine Way - I want my	F 2221	Jun 47	'Hi-jig-a-jig (v. Maureen Morton) / You went
mama'					away and left me (v. Peter Morton)'
MW 363	44	[Art Noel Medley] 'Does she love me -	F 2226	Jly 47	'Jack propelled / Track three'
Down every		street - What more can I say' / [Old Pops Medley No.3] 'Broken doll -	F 2237	Sep 47	'The first day of summer / All over again (v. Maureen Morton)'
Hot lips -		It ain't gonna' rain no more'	F 2243	Oct 47	'My own Darby and Joan (v. Betty Dale) / Paddling in
MW 384	44	[Old Pops Medley No. 4] 'Just an echo in the valley -			the stream'
		I ain't got nobody' / [Old Pops Medley No.5] 'All by yourself	F 2250	Nov 47	'Everybody knows me in my old brown hat /
in the		moonlight - Drifting and dreaming - Show me the way			What d'you
to go home'			think of that'		
PARLOPHONE			F 2262	Jan 48	'Down sweetheart lane (v. Maureen Morton) /
					I cried for you (v. Betty Dale)'
F 2095	Sep 45	'Apple Honey / Jazz comes home from war	F 2276	Mar 48	'Once upon a winter time / I'm happy right
		(both v. Ella Haywood)'			here (both v. Maureen Morton)'
F 2104	Oct 45	'Spooks / Stampeed'	F 2289	May 48	'Roses of Picardy / Trees'
F 2111	Dec 45	'Did you ever get that feeling in the moonlight /	F 2299	Jly 48	'Galway bay (v. Dave Kydd) /
		Carolina (both v. Maureen Morton)'			Only
F 2123	Mar 46	'My heart is dancing with you (v. Joyce Carlyle)			passing clouds'
		/ Two can dream as cheaply as one (v. MM)'	F 2309	Sep 48	'Time may change (v. Dave Kydd) / Pals of the
F 2124	Mar 46	'On another track / El relicario' (both feature Jack on xylophone)			lonesome trail (v. Maureen Morton)'
F 2132	Apl 46	'Never a dull moment (v. Maureen Morton) /	F 2319	Nov 48	'The jolly old man in the bright red suit / I want some money (both v. Betty Kent)'
		I don't know (v. Joyce Carlyle)'	F 2339	Mar 49	'Say something sweet to your sweetheart / Su
F 2138	May 46	'Waiting for the train to come in (v. Maureen			lva Bay'
		serenade'	F 2346	Apl 49	'How can you buy Killarney / I'd give the world to you (both v. Dave Kidd)'
F 2153	Jun 46	'I'll dance at your wedding (v. Maureen Morton)	F 2360	Jun 49	'The wedding of Lilli Marlene /
		/ Kay-ud meelah falta (v. Peter Morton)'			It's you,
F 2155	Jly 46	'You can be sure of me (v. Maureen Morton) /			just you'
Take			F 2372	Aug 49	'Jack's the boy for work (his signature tune) /
it away'					Legio
F 2163	Sep 46	'There's no one but you / Are you coming out			n patrol'
		tonight (both v. Maureen Morton)'	F 2380	Oct 49	'Too-whit too-whoo / A rose in a garden of weeds (both v. Amru Sani)'
F 2181	Nov 46	'One-zy two-zy I love you-zy (v. MM) / The girl that broke my heart (v. Peter Morton)'	F 2383	Nov 49	'I've got a lovely bunch of coconuts (v. JS) /
F 2189	Dec 46	'Sweetheart we'll never grow old (v. Peter Morton) /			Is it too late (v. Amru Sani)'
sweethearts		Mr. Moon you've got a million	F 2395	Jan 50	'Tiddley winkie woo / Down comes the rain
		(v. Maureen Morton)'			(both v. JS)'
			F 2411	May 50	'I'd've baked a cake (v. Rita Williams) / Six times a week and twice on
					(v. JS
					& RW)'
			F 2432	Nov 50	'Stick it on the wall Mrs. Riley /
					The
					whelk song'

## **Six Five Special - and other television pop shows**

The first British television music show aimed purely at a teenage audience was the BBC's '6-5 Special'. The rising popularity of rock & roll during the second half of the 1950's finally persuaded the somewhat stuffy BBC to produce a show reflecting teenagers' pop music interests. Although, as well as giving them "what they wanted", the BBC couldn't help adding "a little of what they needed" by originally including such classical artists as the pianist Pouishnoff and classical guitarist Julian Bream.

Producers of 'Six Five' were Josephine Douglas and Jack Good and the show went out live with a participating audience of appreciative teenagers at 6.05pm on Saturdays. Due to its limited budget they couldn't afford big name American rock & rollers and had to rely on the fledgling home grown product. It was this show and others that followed that turned a lot of young hopefuls into chart topping 'stars', some of them still performing today.

The first 'Six Five Special' was transmitted on 16th February 1957, presented by Jo Douglas and Pete Murray with a sporting spot from ex-boxer Freddie Mills. Artists on that first show included Kenny Baker's Dozen, The King Brothers, Michael Holliday and a film clip of Little Richard singing 'Long tall Sally'. Tommy Steele made his first appearance on 3<sup>rd</sup> March and Lonnie Donegan on 27<sup>th</sup> March. By now the main backing band Kenny Baker's Dozen had been reduced to a Half Dozen to save money, the total budget being £1,000 a show.

Although a ground breaker in its time, viewed today poor old 6-5 looks a bit staged with little atmosphere. Despite that we all seem to recall the show and especially its signature tune "Over the points, over the points, the Six Five Special's coming down the line....." performed by Don Lang and his Frantic Five, with some affection.

Independent Television's reaction was, at first, just to wait and see, but the obvious popularity of 'Six Five' and the publicity it received (good and bad) prompted them, by November, to move in 'Top Numbers' and the 'Jack Jackson Show' in direct competition on Saturday evenings. But although these were popular music shows, their style was too broad to fully capture the teenage viewer. So by the time of the 'Six Five' first anniversary show there was still no serious opposition.

But things were not all rosy at the Beeb, during the early months of 1958 the producers and presenters of 'Six Five Special' had all left. Jo Douglas had gone to Sydney Box Film Productions and produced a film version of the show, starring just about everybody who had ever been on it. Pete Murray was trying out an acting career. So Jim Dale who had been working as a warm up comedian on the show took over as presenter and Russell Turner became its new producer.

Meanwhile Jack Good had deflected to the other side and sold ITV the idea of a new fast moving teenage show "cutting out all the amateur skiffle group coffee bar cowboys and arty ballet dancers". Two pilot shows were transmitted late night during June 1958 and audience reaction was such, Jack was given the go-ahead to produce a series.

So from Saturday 13th September 1958 ITV began transmitting 'Oh Boy' in opposition to '6-5'. Billed as "the fastest moving music show ever on television" it crammed snatches of over 20 songs into each half hour. Rather than do individual spots, artists on the show were encouraged to work together in a continuing wall of sound. On it we were introduced to the rasping sound of Lord Rockingham's XI with Red Price (ex. Ted Heath) on tenor-sax and Cherry Wainer at the organ. Other regulars included The Five Dallas Boys, The Vernon Girls and Neville Taylor and the Cutters. Both Marty Wilde and Cliff Richard built their careers on this show. By November ITV were claiming three times the viewers for 'Oh Boy' as were watching 'Six Five Special'.

Over at the BBC Russell Turner was given the task of revamping 'Six Five' to meet the challenge and this he did by introducing more glamour, in the form of six young ladies called The Six-Five Dates, plus two new bands Tito Burns' Six Fivers and Tony Osborne's Brasshats. Jim Dale continued to front the show which also retained Don Lang in a solo role.

But like most re-makes, they're never as good as the original and by December many voices were suggesting poor old 'Six Five' should be put out of its misery. Taking the hint, the last show was transmitted on Saturday 27th December 1958 and instead of the usual jiving teenage audience, this time it was made up from show business celebrities. Jo Douglas, Pete Murray and Freddie Mills returned for the occasion and so ended the 98 week run of a milestone in television history. Although the 'Six Five Special' had run out of steam, pop music shows rolled on and its replacement 'Dig This' produced by Francis Essex began a 13 week run on 3rd January 1959. That didn't work either and in April the BBC were trying again with 'Drumbeat'. By June 'Juke Box Jury' had taken over.

On ITV the sheer non stop pace of 'Oh Boy' eventually wore itself out and by late summer 1959 a new more romantic ballad style show 'Boy Meets Girl' with Marty Wilde and The Vernon Girls as its featured stars replaced it.

As well as the 'Six Five Special' film, other spin off's included several L.P.'s and a number of stage shows. During the early months of 1958 there were three touring shows based on the BBC programme, 'The Six Five Special Stage Show' promoted by Harold Fielding, with The John Barry Seven, The Dallas Boys and Cab Kaye's Quintet. Then there was 'Stars of the Six Five Special and the Two I's' promoted by Paul Lincoln of the Two I's coffee bar, with Wee Willie Harris, Les Hobeaux Skiffle Group, Tony Crombie and the Rockets, The Most Brothers and comedian Dickie Dawson. Another 'Stars of the Six Five Special' was promoted by Joe Collins (Joan's father), with Don Lang's Frantic Five, The Kenny Baker Half Dozen, Jimmy James Skiffle Group, pianist Joe Henderson, clarinettist Carl Barriteau and Rosemary Squires.

In January 1959 a stage version of 'Oh Boy' took to the road with Lord Rockingham's Eleven making their first public appearance along with Cherry Wainer, Cliff Richard, The Dallas Boys, Neville Taylor and the Cutters, Peter Elliott, Cuddly Duddly, The Vernons Girls and Vince Taylor and the Playmates.

Probably one of Six Five Special's greatest strengths was as a platform for new acts, something

none of its contemporaries ever were as they preferred to keep to regular performers. In this way it gave many artists their first step on the ladder of success.

## SKIFFLE

Skiffle, truly a musical phenomena of the 1950's, brought new life into many an old scrubbing board and empty tea chest. Undoubtedly the decade's 'King' of Skiffle was Lonnie Donegan whose 1955 single 'Rock island line' became a hit on both sides of the Atlantic.

The origins of skiffle go back to late 19th century New Orleans, where is described the 'Hokum' or 'Spasam' music played by poorer people using just the basic form of instruments like comb and paper kazoo, jugs, washboards and all sorts of boxes turned into stringed instruments.

The word skiffle entered the American vocabulary to describe parties where impromptu music was played and was widely used in Chicago during the prohibition days. In 1948 a Harlem newspaper editor Dan Burley formed his Skiffle Boys to recreate some of this music.

In about 1949 skiffle first came to Britain, with a group formed within the Crane River Jazz Band. It is reported that it was percussionist Bill Colyer who suggested using the word skiffle. By 1951 the Ken Colyer Jazzmen began to make skiffle a regular part of their performance, but its influence was still restricted to a comparatively few jazz club enthusiasts. It wasn't until Lonnie and his 'Rock island line' and Nancy Whiskey with 'Freight train' came along, that it reached a mass audience with groups springing up all over the country.

Skiffle was a happy form of music, a cross between folk and jazz easily played by groups of teenagers just able to strum a guitar. A bass was made from a tea chest, broom handle and piece of string, and an old scrubbing board played with thimbles on your fingertips completed the line up. With such a simple combination there was hardly a street in the country that didn't have at least one home made group annoying the neighbours.

With a little more talent and a lot more luck some skiffle groups gained national fame, but these were only a very small proportion of the many who played locally around the British Isles. The successful groups included the afore-mentioned Lonnie Donegan who left Chris Barber's band to form his own. Others were led by Chas McDevitt, Johnny Duncan, Bob Cort, Dickie Bishop and there were also Les Hobeaux, The Vipers and The Saints.

The first skiffle club was probably the one held at the National Jazz Federation on Friday evenings while the London Skiffle and Blues Club opened at the Roundhouse, Wardour Street, Soho in September 1955.

With increasing public interest the BBC introduced its 'Saturday Skiffle Club' in June 1957 hosted by Brian Matthew and Radio Luxembourg began 'Amateur Skiffle Club' with Patrick Allen in April 1958. The latter ran competitions with prizes for the best 'unknown' group. Many newspapers also had contests, including the Daily Herald who ran one at all Butlin camps during the 1957 season with prizes every week.

Without doubt it was the skiffle craze, and the freedom it gave the 'non' musician to have a go at

making music, that led to the development of the sixties beat groups which were a natural consequence, and the end of music as we once knew it!

## The SKYLINERS

During the forties and fifties there were several outfits using the name Skyliners.

The original Skyliners were a service band formed towards the end of the war at Catterick army camp. Members included Bobby Pratt, Alan Braden, Alan Moorhouse, Johnny Keeting, Doug Winsor and Alan Blomerly. Despite limited exposure, the band became popular at local dances and built up a loyal following, but as personnel were constantly demobilised struggled to keep going and eventually folded early 1947.

In June 1947 a four-piece led by drummer Ronnie Heath, calling themselves The Skyliners, began a season at Ryde's Victoria Ballroom on the Isle of Wight.

In July 1953 what had previously been the Arthur Rowberry band at Nottingham's Astoria ballroom acquired a new leader, altoist Jack Smith, and he changed its name to the New Skyliners. This band continued to tour ballrooms until at least mid-1956.

Two of the earliest discs on the Embassy label were by The Skyliners, both recorded late 1954. But this was a vocal group, probably the Mike Sammes Singers.

In 1990 singer David Mears formed a band playing 50's and 60's style music, which he called The Skyliners, apparently still in existence today.

## The SKYROCKETS

The Skyrockets began life during the early war years when a small group of R.A.F recruits doing their basic training at a camp near Blackpool decided to form a dance band to help pass the time and also entertain their colleagues. Training completed, ten members of the group were posted to the No.1 Balloon Centre at Kidbrooke, Kent, where they were attached to the station's Military Band led by Corporal George Beaumont. By early 1941 a 12 piece dance band had emerged from the military band line up that included nine of the original ten that came down from Blackpool. This band came to the notice of the Air Ministry who gave it official duties and the title of the No.1 Balloon Centre Dance Orchestra. Soon they became more commonly known as The Skyrockets, directed by Paul Fenoulhet.

The full personnel line up was Paul Fenoulhet trombone & leader, Chick Smith, Les Lambert and Ted Allaby trumpets, Basil Skinner, Bill Apps, Izzy Duman and Cliff Timms reeds, Jock Reid and Jock Purvis basses, Pat Dodd piano and Reg Sargent drums.

However it was not all fun and their military duties included operating the many barrage balloons sited between the south coast and London, a quite hazardous occupation being in direct line of raids on the Capital. One member, bassist Jock Purvis, lost his life in one of these raids, and most of Kidbrooke camp itself was blasted off the map by a flying bomb in June 1944. All the band were luckily off camp at the time of this latter incident and were re-grouped



at Chessington where for several months they did nothing but repair damaged balloons.

Nevertheless the band did provide much musical entertainment, and not just on camp, with their broadcast on 16th May 1941 being the start of regular air-time, including the Army and Air-Force radio series 'Ack-Ack Beer-Beer' that they were associated with until 1944. They also played to civilian audiences (with Air Council permission), the first significant outing being to the London Palladium for a Jazz Jamboree on 7th September 1941.

Towards the end of 1944 Balloon Command closed down, becoming a part of Fighter Command and The Skyrockets were transferred to Stanmore in Middlesex. Stationed at Bentley Priory, they spent the final six months in uniform as a full time entertainment unit.

Following the end of hostilities the members of the band decided to stay together as a co-operative group and in April 1946, after working a period of mainly one-night-stands, were engaged to accompany the London Palladium show 'High Time' that starred Tessie O'Shea and Nat Jackley, with Jimmy Jewel & Ben Warriss.

When the show ended The Skyrockets were retained for the next Palladium show 'Here, There and Everywhere' with Tommy Trinder. They were there for Charlie Chester's 'Big Show of 1949' and 'Puss in Boots' with Tommy Trinder the same year. With shows often running almost a year each The Skyrockets had firmly established themselves as one of the top bands in London's theatreland.

As such, over many years at the Palladium they backed some of the world's top stars, including Mickey Rooney, Tony Martin, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, The Andrews Sisters, Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne, Danny Kaye, Carmen Miranda and many others. In 1948 The Skyrockets backed Tony Martin on his 'Tenement symphony' recording and American bandleader - singer - comedian Phil Harris on his 1950 HMV single made while he was appearing at the Palladium. One of the numbers Phil recorded was 'You can't make love with a cold' that was written by Gene Crowley one-time singer with the Bram Martin Orchestra. During 1954 The Skyrockets accompanied Johnnie Ray on his Philips album 'Johnnie Ray at the London Palladium' (BBR 8001).

The Skyrockets had made their first recordings, while they were still a service orchestra, in 1943 on the Rex label, transferring later the same year to Parlophone. On all of these recordings credit to the No.1 Balloon Centre is given on the label. When in late 1945 they became a civilian band they began a long series of recordings for H.M.V. as The Skyrockets Dance Orchestra. A number of singers were featured, early on, Leslie Douglas, Beryl Davis and later Cyril Shane, Dick James and Doreen Lundy (who became Mrs. Fenoulhet).

In November 1947 Paul Fenoulhet left to widen his musical interests forming a touring orchestra and Woolf Phillips was brought in to take over the conductor's baton at the Palladium. He in turn left in September 1953 to become musical director at the Pigalle Restaurant. For a while Frank Hagley, leader at Birmingham Hippodrome, replaced him until pianist Eric Rogers was recruited early in 1954.

During these years The Skyrockets backed the artists on a number of Royal Command Shows and did radio work including the long running 'Variety

Bandbox' series, where they replaced Cyril Stapleton's Orchestra in August 1952. Other radio included 'Rhapsody' and 'Stairway to the Stars'. Also from late 1952 they took part in a series of hour long Radio Luxembourg programmes 'Show Time from the London Palladium', sponsored by Lucozade, Phensic and Amani Hair Lotion.

In August 1955 Val Parnell, boss at the Palladium, decided it was time for a change and asked Eric Rogers to form a new London Palladium Orchestra, of which the only original member retained was pianist Pat Dodd. The rest of The Skyrockets became part of a 30 piece orchestra being assembled by Bob Lowe to provide backing for the musical comedy 'The Pajama Game', which opened at London's Coliseum Theatre in October that year. Most of the line up was still there for the March 1957 follow on show 'Damn Yankees'. But the 1955 break up had really been the beginning of the end, and by the close of the decade The Skyrockets story was over.

The Skyrockets Recordings

REX

10172 Feb 43 'Sharing it all with you / Constantly  
(both v. Leslie

Douglas)

10173 Feb 43 'My devotion / Mary's a grand old name  
(both v. Leslie

Douglas)

PARLOPHONE

F 2001 Nov 43 'October mood / Saturday night jump'

F 2004 Dec 43 'I'm mad at myself (v. Leslie Douglas) /  
Hold back the dawn (v. Beryl

Davis)

F 2006 Dec 43 'For the first time (v. Leslie Douglas) /  
The rhythm of the Jeep (v. Beryl

Davis)

F 2010 Feb 44 'Victory polka (v. Leslie Douglas) /  
My heart tells me (v.

Beryl Davis)

F 2018 Feb 44 'No love no nothin' (v. Beryl Davis) /  
Stairway to the stars (v. Leslie

Douglas)

F 2028 May 44 'Piccadilly pastimes / Music for Anglo-  
Saxes'

F 2037 May 44 'Brown eyes / Because I love you'

F 2049 Oct 44 'I'll try / Do you believe in dreams  
(both v. Leslie

Douglas)

F 2053 Oct 44 'It's all right for you / Heavy gang'

F 2057 Jan 45 'The ranch has gone / A dream world is  
waiting

(both v. Benny

Lee)

F 2061 Jan 45 'I'm making believe / What a difference a  
day

made (both v.

Benny Lee)

H.M.V.

BD 5908 Oct 45 'Symphony (v. Cyril Shane) /

Sentimental journey (v. Doreen

Lundy)

BD 5913 Nov 45 'My heart sings / I'll close my eyes  
(both v. Cyril

Shane)

BD 5916 Dec 45 'Lonely footsteps (v. Doreen Lundy) /  
I'm so all alone (v. Cyril

Shane)

BD 5919 Feb 46 'In Pinetop's footsteps / 'Short snorter'

BD 5920 Feb 46 'I'm always chasing rainbows (v. Doreen  
Lundy) / Please don't say no (v.

Cyril Shane)

BD 5921 Feb 46 'A door will open (v. Cyril Shane) / The  
trees

in Grosvenor Square (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5924 Apl 46 'Who could love you like me / Love letters (v. Cyril Shane)  
 BD 5928 May 46 'It might as well be spring / Yippee-olly-ay-ho'  
 BD 5933 Jun 46 'Money is the root of all evil (v. Doreen Lundy) / Mary Lou (v. Cyril Shane)  
 BD 5935 Jly 46 'As if I didn't have enough on my mind (v. Cyril Shane) / Cynthia's in love (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5938 Aug 46 'Primrose Hill (v. Cyril Shane) / Bless you (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5940 Sep 46 'Day by day (v. Cyril Shane) / California sunbeam (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5941 Sep 46 'So would I / The 'Ampstead Way (both v. Cyril Shane)  
 BD 5943 Oct 46 'Cement mixer / Hey ba-ba-re-bob (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5945 Oct 46 'Let it be soon (v. Doreen Lundy) / You keep coming back like a song (v. Cyril Shane)  
 BD 5947 Nov 46 'I fall in love with you every day (v. Doreen Lundy) / One more tomorrow (v. Cyril Shane)  
 BD 5948 Nov 46 'Bayswater bustle / Lullaby moderne'  
 BD 5952 Dec 46 'I wish I had my time to spend again (v. Cyril Shane) / Mr. Moon you've got a million sweethearts (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5955 Dec 46 'All by myself (v. Cyril Shane) / Five minutes more (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5963 Feb 47 'The neighbours complain / Boogie in C'  
 BD 5966 Apl 47 'I keep forgetting to remember (v. Cyril Shane) / Sooner or later (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5970 May 47 'Rickety rickshaw man (v. Cyril Shane) / The whole world is singing my song (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5976 Jun 47 'Imaginez / It's dreamtime (both v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5979 Jly 47 'Down the old Spanish trail / I get up every morning (both v. Cyril Shane)  
 BD 5982 Aug 47 'Try a little tenderness (v. Doreen Lundy) / Linda (v. Dick James)  
 BD 5984 Sep 47 'Bow bells (v. Dick James) / Guilty (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5985 Oct 47 'Phil the fluter's ball / Royal garden blues'  
 BD 5986 Oct 47 'Across the alley from the Almo Road (v. Dick James) / Christmas dreaming (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 5992 Dec 47 'An apple blossom wedding (v. Doreen Lundy) / I'll keep you in my heart (v. Dick James)  
 BD 5995 Jan 48 'Happy-go-lucky you (v. Doreen Lundy) / No greater love (v. Dick James)  
 BD 6000 Mar 48 'Carissima (v. Dick James) /

Once upon a winter time (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 6001 Apl 48 'Blue skies / Night breezes'  
 C 3722 May 48 'Concerto in Jazz (two parts)'  
 BD 6010 Jun 48 'After all / I'd give a million tomorrows (both v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 6011 Jly 48 'I'll stop loving you / Tonight you're my own (both v. Dick James)  
 B 9666 Aug 48 (with Tony Martin) 'Tenement symphony'  
 BD 6016 Aug 48 'A kiss and a rose (v. Dick James) / Rambling rose (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 6019 Sep 48 'Don't blame me (v. Dick James) / Long after tonight (v. Doreen Lundy)  
 BD 6023 Oct 48 'The heart of Loch Lomond (v. Sally Douglas) / Say it every day (v. Alan Dean)  
 BD 6026 Nov 48 'A blossom called the Hungry heart (v. Alan Dean) / I'll be loving you always (v. Sally Douglas)  
 B 9955 Sep 50 (with Phil Harris) 'So tall a tree / You can't make love with a cold'  
 POP 131 Nov 55 (with Edmund Hockridge) 'Hey there / A new town is a blue town' (both from L. Coliseum production of The Pajama Game)

## Joan SMALL

A pretty, petite brunette, a former waitress from Leicester, Joan made a brief bid for stardom during the late fifties.

In 1955 her recording of 'Small talk', from the show 'The Pajama Game', made it to No.3 on the Top Ten. Unfortunately it was only the Pakistan Top Ten - in Britain it went almost un-noticed. A shame because with the right grooming and presentation she could have been quite something.

21 years of age at the time, she was working mainly London clubs and US service bases when Parlophone put her on disc. The recording got her some air time on shows like 'Midday Music Hall' and Jack Jackson's TV show. She had a spell with Bob Miller's Band at Streatham Locarno and toured in variety.

Joan made an appearance in the 1957 'pop' film 'Rock You Sinners' that also featured Art Baxter and his Rocking Sinners and she was the singing voice of Jayne Mansfield in the American blonde bombshell's British made film 'The Challenge'.

Joan broadcast regularly with Eric Winstone's Orchestra and played the 1958 summer season with his band at Butlin's Clacton camp. By the late fifties it was back to mostly playing clubs. In 1961 Joan was doing cabaret aboard the liner 'Queen Mary'. The same year she played her first panto, as Jill in 'Jack and the Beanstalk' at Bexhill-on-Sea's De La Warr Pavilion.

### Joan Small Recordings PARLOPHONE

R 4086 Nov 55 'Small talk / I'm burning my bridges'  
 R 4142 Feb 56 'Come next spring / Change of heart'

R 4211 Sep 56 'Love is a stranger / Autumn concerto' (acc by *Ron Goodwin*)  
*orch*)  
 R 4269 Feb 57 'You can't say I love you to a rock 'n' roll song / Gonna get along without you now'  
 R 4431 May 58 'How many times (can I fall in love) / Afraid'  
 R 4622 Jan 60 'Ask me to go steady / The big hurt' (acc by *Tommy Watt*)  
*orch*)

## Harold SMART

A wizard at the electronic keyboard, Harold was an integral part of the BBC Showband for over six years. He also spent five years supporting the contestants on ITV's 'Take Your Pick'.

Born in 1922, the son of a famous father, Charles Smart who was master of the BBC theatre organ, Harold made his first broadcast on Hammond organ at the age of fifteen. He began touring music halls in the show 'Stars of 1937'.

During the war he spent four years with the Army Medical Corps in France, North Africa and Norway, doing a number of broadcasts from Oslo.

In 1950 he joined his father in a radio series with Smart the elder playing pipe organ while his son joined him on the electronic variety. Harold became a regular broadcaster, not only on the BBC but also for its commercial rival Radio Luxembourg with his series 'Smart Work with Gumption' being sponsored by Gumption Paste Cleaner.

As well as his BBC Show Band duties he was to be heard on several series of the happy 'Sing It Again' show, plus many others like 'Peers Parade' with Donald Peers and the 'Stargazers Music Shop' on which he was joined by his Rhythm Shopwalkers. Harold wrote the music for the 1952 film 'Father's Doing Fine' starring Richard Attenborough, and it is played by his quartet on the sound-track. In 1954 he was voted Britain's top organist by readers of Melody Maker. In 1958 he was picked by Michael Miles as M.D. on his television quiz show 'Take Your Pick' which ran for 14 years.

Harold's first recordings were in November 1948 on the Decca label, partnering Jimmy Blades on chimes, on several discs of Christmas music, something they repeated the following year. These 78's were later released as a 10 inch L.P. 'Chimes and Organ Christmas' (LF 1032). The Harold Smart Quartet backed Petula Clark on some of her early Polygon recordings and later made discs for Parlophone.

Harold was the man behind the very successful recording of 'Little red monkey' released in the U.S. on the London label as the Harry Grove Trio. It made No11 on the charts over there.

By the mid-sixties Harold was on the staff of the Thomas Organ Company, travelling all over this country and the Continent demonstrating their electronic organs. He died in November 1980, aged 58.

Harold Smart Recordings  
 DECCA (with Jimmy Blades on chimes  
*shown*) *except where*

F 9000 Nov 48 'Adeste Fidelis / Silent night'  
 F 9001 Nov 48 'Hark the herald angels sing / It came upon the midnight clear'  
 F 9002 Nov 48 'Joy to the world / O little town of Bethlehem'  
 F 9092 Feb 49 (at organ of Kilburn State with Mantovani on violin) 'Intermezzo from Souvenir de Vienne / North star'  
 F 9178 Jly 49 (organ & rhythm with George Mitchell Choir) 'Sabre dance / Mexican hat dance'  
 F 9237 Nov 49 'While shepherds watched / God rest ye merry gentlemen'  
 F 9238 Nov 49 'The first Nowell / From every spire on Christm as eve'  
 POLYGON  
 P 1002 Dec 50 (H.S Quartet with Petula Clark & The Stargazers) 'You're the sweetest in the land / You are my true love'  
 P 1038 Feb 52 (H.S. Trio with Sue Carson) 'Honey, you can't love two / The nickleodeon rag'  
 PARLOPHONE (Harold Smart Quartet except where shown)  
 R 3486 Feb 52 'Cross hands boogie / Polly' (acc by bass, drums & Monia Liter on piano)  
 R 3505 Mar 52 (with Charles Smart on Compton theatre organ) 'Flirtation waltz / Fairy on the clock'  
 R 3519 Apl 52 'Alligator crawl / John Peel boogie'  
 R 3541 Jun 52 'Lover / Wedding of the painted doll'  
 R 3570 Sep 52 (with The Luton Girls Choir) 'Within these sacred walls / Each Sunday morn'  
 R 3579 Sep 52 'Jungle rhythm / Valse oriental'  
 R 3596 Oct 52 'Father's doing fine / Pagan in the parlour'  
 R 3753 Nov 52 'Swedish rhapsody / Kitchen rag'  
 DECCA (First four discs are a story told by John Blyton with music from Harold Smart)  
 F 10221 Dec 53 'Attack from Zarrus - A space adventure of the future - episode 1'  
 F 10256 Feb 54 'Attack from Zarrus - episode 2'  
 F 10294 Apl 54 'Attack from Zarrus - episode 3'  
 F 10661 Dec 55 'Attack from Zarrus - episode 4'  
 F 10391 Oct 54 (HS Quartet) 'Messenger boy / Happy tango'  
 (I include the following recordings by the Harry Grove Trio as I believe they are all, almost certainly, Harold Smart)  
 F 9969 Dec 52 'Meet Mr. Callaghan / Intermezzo'  
 F 10019 Dec 52 'Pagan in the parlour / Father's doing fine'  
 F 10079 May 53 'Little red monkey / The magic music box'  
 F 10126 Jun 53 'The night of the fourth / Strictly personal'  
 F 10267 Mar 54 'Song of The Maggie / Wunderbar'  
 F 10283 Apl 54 'Danish rhapsody / Lichee garden'  
 F 10321 Jun 54 'The lazy whistler / Family joke'

## Betty SMITH

Betty was queen of the tenor-sax. Born 5th July 1929 at Sileby near Leicester, where her mother owned a village pub. She began her music tuition on piano at the age of six taking up the saxophone a few years later. After leaving school at the age of 14 Betty joined Archie's Juveniles on alto-sax, playing alongside Wally Stott. She then switched to tenor sax and played in Blanche Coleman's all girl band. In 1947 17 year old Betty toured the Middle East as a member of pianist Billy Penrose's Quartet. By now she was also doubling on clarinet and adding the occasional vocal. Obviously hooked on foreign travel the following year she was off to Germany as a member of Ray Starita's Starlighters. Betty then had a spell in Ivy Benson's all girl orchestra.

On 14th August 1950, now part of Freddy Randall's Band, Betty married trumpeter Jack Peberdy. After the wedding she settled down in Leicester for a couple of years, playing at the local Grand Hotel, before rejoining Freddy Randall in September 1953. So followed several years of touring mostly one-night-stands, until Betty left to form her own quartet in February 1957.

First booking was a tour of service camps in Germany on a bill backing comedians Tony Hancock and Jimmy Edwards. Promotional material read "Presenting the new sensational Betty Smith Quartet - Europe's greatest girl saxophonist and her all male group". The lucky guys were husband Jack Peberdy on bass, Brian Lemon piano and Stan Rourke drums. In June the quartet became a quintet with the addition of Barry Phillips on guitar.

Back in Britain they played their first concert on home ground at Guildford's New Ballroom on 6th April 1957. The same month Decca Records signed them up for the Tempo label, with the first release being an E.P (EXA 74) comprising 'Little white lies / Sweet Georgia Brown / Lulu's back in town / There'll be some changes made', with vocals from Betty. Although mainly a jazz unit she was never afraid of trying something different and in 1957, with skiffle currently very popular, she made a couple of singles billed as the Betty Smith Skiffle Group.

In 1958 she was billed as "The Hand Jive Girl" following release of her recording of the same name. A novelty number it was also issued in the States on the London label. Although totally ignored at home it was the 'B' side, an instrumental revival of the popular 1950 song 'Bewitched', that sold a lot of copies over there reaching No.50 on the US best sellers chart. London followed this with her version of 'My foolish heart' which didn't get an issue this side of the Atlantic. There were also rumours of an American L.P.

The Betty Smith group aired on the BBC's 'Festival of Dance Music' from the Royal Albert Hall on 16th April 1957 and were on 'Break For Jazz' on 28th May. Betty played a solo spot on 'Midday Music Hall' on 14th May and again on 12th September. The whole group were on a BBC TV 'Six Five Special' on 7th September and Jack Jackson's ITV show on 13th October. From 21st November Betty solo'd at Radio Luxembourg on the 'Sing And Be Happy' series with Ronnie Ronalde and Geoff Love's Orchestra. Another Luxembourg show was

'The Dixielanders - With Betty Smith' on which she was backed by an all star group of musicians.

Touring in variety during 1958, mainly around Granada Cinemas, the group did a lot of work on a bill with Lonnie Donegan and Tommy Steele. In early 1959 they headed a package playing six weeks in Germany with trumpeter Kenny Baker. Changes in the group saw both Pete Williams and Terry Donaghue try out the guitarist chair and Sid Boatman replaced Brian Lemon on piano.

Betty continued to do a lot of solo spots on radio programmes like 'Workers Playtime', while the group aired on 'Music in the Modern Manner', 'Saturday Club' and 'Go Man Go'. On television they could be seen on 'Cool For Cats' and the 'Jack Jackson Show' (I well remember taping her version of 'Stormy weather' off the television on my first reel to reel tape recorder).

During the summer of 1959 the quintet played a 13 week season at Southsea's South Parade Pier and in 1960, 18 weeks at the Channel Islands Hotel, Guernsey. In between they toured British and US service bases in Germany, plus two weeks at Frankfurt's Storyville Jazz Club. Summer 1961 found them at Cliftonville Lido for 16 weeks with The Honeys. And so it continued (they played the summer season at my home town of Weston-super-Mare in 1966 in 'The Norman Vaughan Show') with Betty being musically active through into the eighties.

### Betty Smith Recordings

TEMPO		(Betty Smith Skiffle Group)
A 162	Aug 57	'There's a blue ridge round my heart Virginia (v. BS) / Double shuffle'
A 163	Oct 57	'Sweet Georgia Brown / Little white lies'
DECCA		(Betty Smith Group)
F 10986	Feb 58	'Hand jive / Bewitched'
F 11031	Jun 58	'Will the angels play their harps for me / Betty's blues'
F 11071	Oct 58	'Begin the beguine / Song of the boulevards'
(acc by Glen Somers orch & chorus)		
F 11124	Mar 59	'Stormy weather / Song of India' (acc by Malcolm Lockyer Group)

## The Five SMITH Brothers

Fondly remembered as "Mr. & Mrs. Smith's five little boys" the singing Five Smith Brothers, although not so little, really were brothers. Alfred, Harold, Martin, Royston and Stanley came from Newcastle and were all born before 1918. Alf, Harold and Stan had all served time as professional footballers and as a family they had all done much singing in local charity shows. The brothers' first professional appearance was at Gateshead in 1932. In 1936 the still virtually unknown group were singing with Teddy Joyce and his Orchestra. This is where they first met clarinettist Tommy Bonny who would later join the group.

All five brothers served during WWII and survived, only to face in 1946 the tragic death of Martin in a road accident just as they were about to re-start their stage career. Luckily they soon found an

excellent replacement in clarinet playing Ronald Culbertson, who became Ronnie Smith.

The group with a fine full throated sound, backed by their own guitar and clarinet accompaniment, made their first broadcast on a 'Variety Bandbox' show and then continued to appear regularly on the programme. They were also associated with radio's late forties series 'Up the Pole' that starred Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warriss.

One of their first bookings after the war was a season with comedian Tommy Morgan in Belfast. Touring in variety most of the year, they were soon a top of the bill act and starred in Blackpool Hippodrome's 1948 summer show 'Cocoanut Grove' alongside Jewel & Warriss and Josef Locke. In June 1949 Tommy Bonny took over from Ronnie Culbertson on clarinet.

Throughout the 1950's the brothers toured extensively in variety and twice appeared on a Royal Command Performance, the first time in November 1950 at the London Palladium and again, on one of the few out-of-town Royal Shows, at Blackpool's Opera House in April 1955.

The lads were also quite productive on disc, originally on Parlophone and later on Decca, most recorded before record sales charts existed. When charts did appear the Five Smith Brothers were there for just one week at No.20 in July 1955 with their version of the song 'I'm in favour of friendship'. Their records also sold well in America getting favourable reviews from Billboard magazine.

By the end of the fifties the Smith Brothers' style was beginning to sound a bit old fashioned, even though they tried to come up to date with a version of Bill Haley's 'A.B.C. boogie' and by the sixties the act had all but disappeared. The final record was by just two of the brothers (which two wasn't indicated) in 1963.

#### The Five Smith Brothers Recordings

PARLOPHONE (F 3000 was Parlophone's Scottish series)

F 3341 Feb 41 (*Four Smith Bros*) 'My home in the Highland hills / It's another day

to victory'

F 3376 Nov 47 'In dear old Glasgow town / Back to Donegal'

F 3377 Jan 48 'I'll take you home again Kathleen / Eileen

O'Grady'

F 2282 Apl 48 'The shoemaker serenade / When it's evening'

F 2293 Jly 48 'When you and I were young Maggie / The

cobbler'

F 2303 Aug 48 'Toolie oolie doolie / Irish medley'  
F 2314 Oct 48 'Rambling rose / Sipping cider by Zyder sea'

(acc by clarinet &

*guitar*)

F 3385 Dec 48 'The star o' Robbie Burns / A guid New Year'

F 2329 Jan 49 'All dressed up with a broken heart / Underneath the

arches'

F 2342 Mar 49 'By the old willow tree / Blaydon races' (acc by

*clarinet &*

*guitar*)

F 2355 May 49 'Kentucky babe - By the light of the silvery moon /

Lillette'

F 2361 Jun 49 'Put your shoes on Lucy / I cried for you'  
F 2370 Aug 49 'Geordie had the bairn /

Keep your feet still

Geordie Hilly'

R 3229 Oct 49 'A shawl of galway grey / Am I wasting my

time on you' (acc by guitar &

*clarinet*)

R 3239 Dec 49 'Hop Scotch polka / Play that barber shop

chord'

R 3258 Feb 50 'A rose in a garden of weeds / Wedding at

Donegal Bay'

R 3266 Feb 50 'The Harry Lime theme / We want Muffin'

R 3290 Jun 50 'Dearie / A load of hay'

R 3304 Jun 50 'The sunshine of your smile / My gal Sal'

R 3325 Oct 50 'Silver dollar / Play a simple melody'

R 3341 Nov 50 'Goodnight Irene / Can anyone explain'

R 3353 Jan 51 'So long Sally / The thing'

R 3365 Mar 51 'When I leave the world behind / My mother's

eyes / Silver threads among

the gold'

R 3378 Apl 51 'So long / I ain't gonna grieve'

R 3388 May 51 'He like it, she like it / Smokin' and a dreamin''

R 3403 Jly 51 'Blue eyes / There's more pretty girls than one'

R 3414 Aug 51 'Let's get going / Barefoot days

R 3440 Oct 51 'In the cool, cool, cool of the evening / So many times have I cried

over you'

R 3463 Dec 51 'Frosty the snowman / Sweetheart of yesterday'

(acc by Philip Green

*orch*)

R 3481 Jan 52 'A Gordon for me / The Lambton worm'

R 3522 May 52 'Saturday rag / A kiss for ev'ry candle' (acc by

*Philip Green*

*orch*)

R 3534 Jly 52 'You wish me to forget you / Hannigan's

hooley'

R 3589 Nov 52 'A mighty pretty waltz / Forget me not' (acc by

*Philip Green*

*orch*)

R 3672 Apl 53 'When are we gonna get married / O my! Jock

Mackay'

R 3725 Aug 53 'Cushie Butterfield / On Ilkla'moor baht'at'

R 3859 May 54 'The homecoming waltz / The song of the

Maggie'

DECCA

F 10403 Nov 54 'Veni-vidi-vici / A.B.C. boogie'

F 10507 Apl 55 'You're as sweet today / Paper valentine'

F 10527 May 55 'I'm in favour of friendship / Don't worry' (acc by Johnny Douglas

*orch*)

F 10529 May 55 (solo by Roy Smith) 'The devil's in your eyes /

Red

roses'

F 10644 Nov 55 " 'He / Glengarry'

F 10698 Mar 56 'You took my heart / The grass is green'

F 10759 Jly 56 'Bacon barbecue / Smith, what a name' (acc by

*Don Smith*

*band*)

F 11578 Jan 63 (Two Smith Bros.) 'Let your mind roll on / Cherr

y wine'

**Don SMITH**

For two years after the war Don played trumpet and sang with the Oscar Rabin Band before branching out on his own. He had led his own semi-pro gig band from the age of sixteen up until his six year spell in the R.A.F.

In April 1948 it was Oscar Rabin who launched Don's career as a professional bandleader, promoting him for the residency at the Samson & Hercules Ballroom, Norwich, following the death of previous leader Harry Gerard. Vocals were supplied by Don and another ex-Rabin member, Annabelle Lee.

For the next 18 months Don alternated between Norwich and Lowestoft's Palais de Dance (under the same ownership of Geoffrey Watling). In October 1948 he moved to Sherry's Ballroom in Brighton for the winter season, with Annabelle Lee still adding a touch of glamour.

When Ken Mackintosh vacated Nottingham's Astoria Ballroom in July 1950 Don took over with a 12 piece outfit named The Stardusters. During the early fifties he led bands at the Wimbledon Palais, Purley Orchid Rooms and Luton's Cresta Ballroom, where he spent two years with Shirley Wilson as vocalist.

Leaving the Cresta in February 1958, Don took up residence at the Oxford Galleries, Newcastle-on-Tyne, taking over from George Evans who was retiring. With him at Newcastle were singers Marion Williams (who had been with him at Nottingham) and Juliet Raynor. He was still there the mid-sixties.

Earning the title "Mr. Personality" Don Smith continued to lead one of Mecca's most popular contract bands for many years.

Don who always led the band whilst retaining his trumpet seat, made at least one record, backing The Five Smith Brothers on an appropriate song, simply called 'Smith'.

Don Smith Band Recordings  
DECCA

F 10759 Jly 56 'Smith (what a name to be stuck with) /  
Bacon  
barbecue (both v. The Five Smith  
Brothers)

## Muriel SMITH

Best known in Britain for her 1953 hit recording of 'Hold me, thrill me, kiss me', which held No.3 position on the New Musical Express best sellers list for four weeks during June and July.

A coloured American from New York, even as a schoolgirl Muriel always had an ambition to become a singer and worked as a waitress and shop-assistant to pay for lessons. Leaving college in 1943 she went straight into the role of Carmen in the all coloured Broadway production of 'Carmen Jones'. Muriel also sang with Paul Whiteman and other top orchestras.

In 1949 she came to England to appear in Cecil Landeau's revue 'Sauce Tartare' that opened at London's Cambridge Theatre in May, with Ronald Frankau, Renee Houston and Claude Hulbert. She followed this with 'Sauce Piquante', with Norman Wisdom, Moira Lister and Douglas Byng at the same theatre a year later.

Early in 1951 H.M.V. took her into a recording studio and the result 'Can't help lovin' that man' from the musical 'Show Boat' became her first disc when it was issued in May. Muriel made just one more record for H.M.V. about a year later. By now she was often to be heard on air and did several broadcasts including 'Talking of Songs' with Harold Smart at the organ, and 'Walk Together Chillun' with Edric Connor and The George Mitchell Choir.

In November 1951, playing the role of Bloody Mary, Muriel opened in the Drury Lane production of 'South Pacific' with Mary Martin, Ivor Emmanuel and Bella St. John. Although not in the 1958 film of the musical, it was her voice that sang the Bloody Mary songs 'Bali Ha'i' and 'Happy talk' for actress Juanita Hall. Even though Juanita had sang in the Broadway version, her voice wasn't considered good enough for the film and Muriel's was dubbed on. Recordings from the Drury Lane production were issued on Columbia.

In 1952 Muriel was seen as well as heard in the British Lion film 'Moulin Rouge' based on the life of the dwarf artist Toulouse-Lautrec, played by Jose Ferrer. She had a spot as a water-front cafe singer in the 1956 Royal Premiere film 'The Battle of the River Plate'.

Early in 1953 she signed with the new Philips label and her very first release in April was the successful 'Hold me, thrill me, kiss me'. With a voice really too good for pop songs, it's not surprising Muriel was in demand for more serious music and often gave classical and operatic recitals.

But there was no way she was going to be allowed to leave Drury Lane for long and in October 1953 she was back there again in 'The King and I', a show that ran for over two years.

There were further record releases from Philips, including 'Something wonderful' from 'The King and I', and popular songs like 'Oh my Papa', 'Climb up the wall' and 'How important can it be', with her last recording coming in March 1955.

Following a spell back in the States, Muriel was again appearing in London during 1957 in an operatic version of 'Carmen'. But by May 1958 she had changed direction completely and was touring American cities with a troop of performers acting out a moral conscience play 'The Crowning Experience', all about the life of negro educator Mary McLeod Bethune. Their meagre income was just about enough to keep them going, and for this she had given up bookings worth hundreds of pounds. In so doing Muriel said she had finally found moral and spiritual peace within herself.

Muriel Smith Recordings

H.M.V. (acc by Frank Cordell orch)

B 10079 May 51 'Can't help lovin' dat man / My mothers  
lullaby'  
B 10213 Feb 52 'I love him as he is / All on account of a  
guy'

COLUMBIA

DB 2957 Nov 51 'Bali Ha'i / Happy talk' (acc by the  
Drury Lane theatre  
orch)

PHILIPS

PB 122 Apl 53 'Hold me thrill me kiss me / I'd love to fall

asleep' (acc by Wally Stott

Orch)

PB 158 Jly 53 'Oh what you do to me / Love' (with Rita Williams Singers acc by

WSO)

PB 191 Nov 53 'My Lord and master - from 'The King and I'

(acc by Reginald Burston

Orch)

PB 218 Jan 54 'Oh my papa / The one I love'

PB 355 Jan 55 'Climb up the wall / Tonight my love'

PB 422 Mar 55 'How important can it be / Sincerely'

## BRUNSWICK

5370 Feb 55 (with June Hawkins) 'Beat out the rhythm on a

drum / Dat's

love'

## Soap Opera

I know this has nothing to do with popular music, or even opera, but in passing I thought you might like to know (and if you lived in London in the fifties, possibly be reminded of) what was the UK's first television 'soap'.

It all began on American radio around 1930, with fifteen minute daily serials, aimed at the housewife. Classified as 'day-time drama' they often ran one after the other and soon became known as 'soap operas' because so many were sponsored by the makers of washing powder. There were nearly 200 different titles with as many as 35 running at the same time. Most came from Chicago and some of the best remembered are 'Back Stage Wife', 'The Guiding Light', 'Life of Mary Southern' and 'One Man's Family'. Some, using the original American script but with a British cast, were heard pre-war over Radio Luxembourg. Probably the nearest the BBC ever got was 'Mrs. Dales Diary' that began in January 1948.

By the 1950's the 'soaps' had crossed over to television on both sides of the Atlantic. The BBC had 'The Grove Family' first shown in 1954 and often quoted as Britain's first TV 'soap opera'. But this wasn't a 'soap' as we know it, being really just a weekly situation comedy.

This country's first real 'soap opera' was born when commercial television opened in 1955. To be precise at 10.45am on Friday 23rd September 1955, when 'Sixpenny Corner' appeared with the first of its thirteen and a half minute long daily episodes. 'Sixpenny Corner' was the story of Sally and Bill Norton (played by Patricia Dainton and Howard Pays) and the happenings at their rather run down garage at Sixpenny Corner in the imaginary growing town of Springwood near London. Patricia Dainton, a former Rank starlet, shared the cover of the very first 'TV Times' (20th September 1955) with American comedienne Lucille Ball.

Produced by Associated Rediffusion and written by Jonquil Antony (creator of Mrs. Dale's Diary) and Hazel Adair (who went on to create 'Crossroads' and 'Compact'), 'Sixpenny Corner' only lasted until May 1956. This wasn't due to it being unpopular, but just a question of finance when both the new Birmingham and Manchester ITC stations refused to buy it because of its London based image.

Britain's most famous and longest running soap opera 'Coronation Street' began in December 1960.

## Virginia SOMERS

The American born wife of arranger-conductor Reg Owen, Virginia was a fairly prominent cabaret artist during the fifties and made a couple of records on the Decca label.

With a range of talents that extended from musical comedy singing to boogie woogie piano playing, she was in great demand and regularly toured in variety. Virginia played in revue and had her own Sunday evening Radio Luxembourg series.

Virginia Somers Recordings

DECCA (with The Brass Hats)

F 10215 Nov 53 'Crystal ball / Maybe'

F 10301 Apl 54 'Cross over the bridge / Lovin' spree'

## The Song Pedlars

The Song Pedlars were a vocal group that soon earned themselves a fine reputation. Originally formed in 1937 by Bob Winnette, the line up early in 1946 was Alan Dean, Bob Winnette, Bob Brown and Helen McKay. Later the same year Bob Brown, a founder member, left to join the Bob Roberts Orchestra resident at Torquay's Spa Ballroom and Johnnie Johnston took his place for a while.

In October 1947 they made their first record when Decca used them as backing group with the Bob Farnon Orchestra on the Denny Dennis vocal 'Chi-baba, chi-baba'. They went on to back several solo artists.

Also during 1947 The Song Pedlars were a vocal ingredient on the radio series 'Navy Mixture', plus featured spots on shows like 'Variety Parade'. From March 1948 they became resident group on Vic Oliver's series 'Oliver Twists', with Stanley Black and the BBC Dance Orchestra.

On 4th January 1949 the BBC broadcast it's first music chart show, 'Hit Parade', where popular songs of the day were performed by resident singers Anne Shelton and Bruce Trent, ably supported by The Song Pedlars. These and other broadcasts kept the group well employed throughout the late forties.

By 1950 the line up had changed to two boys and two girls. Bob Winnette and his wife Helen McKay were still there - it was Helen who sang the first song, 'Here's looking at you', on television at Radio Olympia in 1936 (Helen also led The Temple Belles female chorus) - joined by Eddie Lester and Sally Douglas (who married Jimmy Young). Later Linda Russell took over from Sally.

Now also beginning to appear more often on stage, they were backing Lena Horne on her London Palladium show during August 1950 and again accompanied Lena when she toured Britain in 1952. During the early fifties The Song Pedlars toured in variety with a very polished stage act and appeared in the 1952 Donald Peers film 'Sing along with me'.

Continuing their regular radio work, they joined the long running 'Sing it Again' series and were on 'Saturday Night Review'. They were heard on 'Henry Hall's Guest Night', 'Music Hall', 'Look Who's Here' and 'Workers Playtime'. On Saturday 15th March 1952 they made their, reported, 1,000th broadcast, on 'In Town Tonight'. The line up at the time was Bob Winnette, Helen McKay, Frank Holmes and Linda Russell. On television, the group's 19th August 1953 appearance, vocally linking the acts, on

'Variety Express' was quoted as their 129th TV show.

On record they were still being used as a backing group and turned up on H.M.V singles by Donald Peers and Parlophone sides by Larry Cross and Eve Boswell.

After 1953 details of The Song Pedlars appear to come to an end and it's most likely they broke up about then. Many members went on to work in other vocal groups. Johnny Johnston became famous for The Johnston Brothers and The Keynotes, groups that also included Eddie Lester. Bob Brown became one of The Stargazers.

#### The Song Pedlars Recordings

##### DECCA

F 8810 Sep 47 (with Denny Dennis) 'Chi-baba Chi-baba'  
 F 8849 Mar 48 (with Harry Roy Band) 'When the rain is all  
 rained out'  
 F 9041 Dec 48 (with Denny Dennis) 'A fella with an  
 umbrella / Steppin' out with my  
 baby'  
 H.M.V.  
 BD 6095 Jun 51 (with Sid Phillips Band) 'On top of old  
 smoky'  
 BD 6100 Jly 51 (with Johnny Eager & Sid Phillips Band) 'When you and I were young  
 Maggie blues'  
 B 10089 Jun 51 (with Donald Peers) 'Mariandl andl andl /  
 An armful of  
 roses'  
 B 10107 Jly 51 " " 'By the kissing rock /  
 Sing a little  
 sweeter'  
 B 10518 Jly 53 (with Max Bygraves) 'Time to dream'  
 B 10546 Aug 53 " " 'Big Head'

##### PARLOPHONE

R 3411 Jun 51 (with Larry Cross) 'My truly truly fair'  
 R 3420 Aug 51 " " " 'Sweet violets'  
 F 2475 Sep 51 (with Billy Thorburn Orch) 'The little grey  
 donkey / Hoop diddle-ee-i doo-ra-  
 li-ay'  
 F 2551 Mar 53 (with Billy Thorburn Orch) 'I'd love to fall  
 asleep'  
 R 3723 Aug 53 (with Eve Boswell) 'Tell me who's your  
 sweetheart'

## The Southlanders

This coloured vocal quartet attempted to match the American groups like The Ink Spots. Although never reaching such heights, billed as "The Sepia Stars of Radio and TV" they nevertheless continued to entertain the public over many years and produce some very enjoyable music.

The Southlanders were Allan Wilmot and his brother Harry, with Vernon Nesmith and Frank Mannah. All from Jamaica, they teamed up as a group while in Britain serving with the R.A.F. during the war. When hostilities ended they all returned to the West Indies, but in 1952 Allan came back and found work singing in London clubs. Noting that recordings by American coloured groups such as The Ink Spots, Mills Brothers etc. were very popular here, he considered a home grown version may do well. Contacting the other three members of the

wartime quartet, he persuaded them to come over and join him.

So The Southlanders were born making their first broadcast on 'In Town Tonight'. Being well received further radio and TV dates followed and Argo Records used them as backing on an Edric Connor L.P. 'Songs from Jamaica' and its follow up 'Songs from Trinidad'. The Grade Organisation booked them for a variety tour and Geraldo used them on several Sunday concerts. During 1954 The Southlanders toured in variety on bills headed by Ken Platt and Stan Stennett and on 7th December the boys flew to Rome for an appearance on Italian T.V, one of the first British acts to do so.

George Martin heard the group on radio and signed them for Parlophone. Their first record out in May 1955 featured the R & B song 'Earth angel', ironically a big hit for the all white Canadian Crew Cuts, although the song had originated and was written by a member of the Penguins, a coloured quartet from Los Angeles. Coupling was 'The Crazy Otto rag', also covered by The Stargazers and it was they who took chart honours with this one. The Southlanders' second record in October also featured two popular songs, but unfortunately the hit number 'Ain't that a shame' proved to be more successful for other singers. There was one more single from Parlophone, then it was over a year in the record wilderness.

No matter, on stage their close harmony act included a mix of comedy numbers which ensured they were a hugely popular addition to any variety bill and never short of work. During the autumn of 1955 the boys did three months at Glasgow's Pavilion and played the 1956 summer season on Blackpool's North Pier in 'On with the Show' starring Frankie Vaughan and Ted Lue. Radio airings included several 'Midday Music Hall' and 'Workers Playtime' shows.

When 'Banana boat song' became a chart success early in 1957, it is surprising that The Southlanders were never given the opportunity to put their version on to disc, even though it had featured in their stage act for several years. It was in fact one of the titles they had recorded with Edric Connor for Argo under its original title 'Day da light' (Jamaican lingo for "here comes the dawn").

But in October 1957 they were back on record, now with Decca, and their very first release on that label turned out to be their biggest hit, 'Alone'. During a ten week run on the New Musical Express chart, where it battled with three other versions of the song, it rose to No.17. Several more singles followed on Decca and later Top Rank, but The Southlanders never again made the hit parade. Maybe not a hit, but their 'I am a mole and I live in a hole' certainly went down well with variety audiences.

Early in 1957 the lads were on a tour of service camps in Germany, where they recorded a series of 15 minute programmes for transmission over the American Service Network. More Continental touring followed with the show 'Calypso Caravan'. This set the pattern for the remaining fifties with regular work around American service camps at home and abroad, plus variety work all over Europe that usually included a summer season in Britain.

During the rocking sixties the boys adapted to the changing fashion in variety moving easily into club work and were successful enough to be still performing in the eighties.



The actor Gary Wilmot is the son of one of the Wilmot brothers, I'm not sure which.

#### The Southlanders Recordings

##### PARLOPHONE

- R 4025 May 55 'Earth angel / The crazy Otto rag'  
R 4069 Oct 55 'Have you ever been lonely /  
Ain't that a  
shame'  
R 4171 May 56 'The wedding of the lucky black cat /  
Hush-a-bye  
rock'  
DECCA
- F 10946 Oct 57 'Alone / Swedish polka' (*acc by  
Glen Somers  
orch*)  
F 10958 Nov 57 'Peanuts / I never dreamed'  
F 10982 Jan 58 'Put a light in the window / Penny loafers  
and  
bobby socks' (*acc by Malcolm  
Lockyer orch*)  
F 11014 May 58 'Down deep / Wishing for your love' (*acc  
by  
Eric  
Rogers orch*)  
F 11032 Jun 58 'Torero / I wanna jive tonight'  
F 11067 Oct 58 'The mole in a hole / Choo-choo-choo-  
choo  
cha-cha-cha' (*acc by Glen  
Somers orch*)  
TOP RANK
- JAR 403 Jly 60 'Imitation of love / Charlie'

## The Squadronaires

One of several bands that started life as a service orchestra, the Squadronaires were the first large dance band to be formed in any of the services. It all began in 1940 when the Royal Air Force invited members of several well known civilian bands to join up and become part of the R.A.F No.1 Dance Orchestra.

Most musicians knew that they could be 'called up' at any time and so this seemed an idea way of getting into uniform. The nucleus of players, that included Tommy McQuater, George Chisholm, Eric Breeze, Harry Lewis, Andy McDevitt, Jock Cummings and Sid Colin came from the Ambrose Orchestra, plus Jimmy Miller who had been singing and playing piano in an Ambrose Octet. Others to join were Jimmy Durrant from the Brian Lawrance Lansdowne House Orchestra, Tommy Bradbury from Eddie Carroll's Band, Arthur Maden from Lew Stone's Band and Ronnie Aldrich who had been piano accompanist to Elsie Carlisle in variety.

After a period of initial service training, the band began touring service camps across Britain and half of Europe. By collective choice of its members, personable slim good-looking red-headed bespectacled Sgt. Jimmy Miller was chosen to front the band. Jimmy also provided many of the vocals along with Sid Colin and Billy Nichols who in peace time had been with Oscar Rabin.

Almost as soon as it was formed the Royal Air Force Dance Orchestra (it was really only after the war that it became known as The Squadronaires) "with permission of the Air Council" began recording on the Decca label. Among the many issues was their signature tune, the appropriate 'There's something in the air'. Many of the bands arrangements were by

Ronnie Aldrich and one tune he wrote, with words by Sid Colin, 'If I only had wings' became a huge hit on their stage shows.

The band's stage show that very occasionally was presented to a civilian audience was a two hour delight. Produced by Jimmy Miller and Sid Colin it blended swing and sweet sentimental tunes with the emphasis always on good dance music. They played at R.A.F stations, aircraft factories, Red Cross units etc. indoors or out with the stage often being no more than two lorries back to back. The band was also busy broadcasting and in 1944 provided the music for the Vera Lynn film 'One Exciting Night'. In 1944 the Squadronaires were voted top British dance band in 'Melody Maker' readers poll, with Geraldo coming second.

By the end of the war, almost all of the original team were still there with only Harry Lewis missing, having been invalided out in 1942. After the war the Squadronaires continued to tour service camps across Europe for a time, but the summer of 1946 found them enjoying the season, along with crowds of happy holiday-makers, at Butlin's Clacton Holiday Camp. And they were back there again in 1947.

Current line up was Jimmy Miller as leader & vocalist, Tommy McQuater, Jimmy Watson and Archie Craig on trumpets, George Chisholm and Eric Breeze on trombone, Tommy Bradbury and Monty Levy on alto-sax, Jimmy Durrant and Andy McDevitt tenor-sax, Cliff Townshend baritone-sax, Ronnie Aldrich piano, Arthur Maden bass and Jock Cummings drums with Doreen Stephens making up the vocal department. Billy Nichols should have been with them at Butlins, but he dropped out as his wife was expecting a baby and he wanted to stay in London. The Quads vocal group that enhanced the bands stage show and sang on several of their recordings were Monty Levy, Jimmy Watson, Cliff Townshend and Eric Breeze.

Between their summer seasons the Squadronaires played one-night-stands and variety, with a most successful week at the London Palladium in February 1947. They broadcast regularly on 'Band Parade' and, augmented with strings, flute and harp, joined singer Sam Browne on radio in 'Your Tune Is My Tune' a new series that began in January 1948. They also backed Sam on several of his recordings.

For the 1948 summer season they were back at Butlin's, but this time at Filey. Doreen Stephens left just before the season started and so 22 year old Dorothee Baronne, who used to live in the Middle East and toured with the U.S wartime Jive Bombers band, was brought in as replacement. During the year she was replaced by two new singers, Yorkshire lass Ann Shaw and 16 year old Londoner Susan Jeans. Continuing constant touring during the winter months they were probably glad of another Butlin season, back at Clacton in 1949. During the year they also featured in the comedy film 'High Jinks In Society'.

By the end of 1949 singer Ann Shaw had left and 21 year old Roy Edwards had joined Jimmy Miller, Susan Jeans and The Quads in providing the vocals. On radio they had their own spotlight show 'There's something in the Air', broadcast on 6th February 1950.

The real reason why Jimmy Miller left The Squadronaires has always been shrouded in mystery. He said "he no longer felt wanted" and there were certainly rumours of disagreements within the band. Whatever the reason, after over ten

years as a principal member of the outfit, he left in September 1950. Initially Roy Edwards took over as leader, but a year later Ronnie Aldrich was persuaded to give up his piano stool and take up the baton.

A shy, private, quietly spoken man, Jimmy Miller was born at Aberdeen on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1916 and studied piano as a child. His introduction to show-business came touring the halls as a Gypsy duo with his violin playing brother Bill known as The Miller Brothers. A Children's Hour broadcast they made over the Scottish region was fortunately heard by Jack Hylton who signed them to a three year contract bringing them to London to appear in his revue 'Life Begins at Oxford Circus'. The boys went on to work with both the Jack Hylton and Mrs Jack Hylton bands (Jimmy's first recordings were with Mrs. Jack Hylton). Later the duo went their separate ways and Jimmy joined Ambrose, staying until he entered the R.A.F. After leaving the Squadronaires he became deputy leader to Carroll Gibbons at the Savoy Hotel, taking over as leader when Carroll died in May 1954. Jimmy died after a long period of illness in March 2001.

The Squadronaires continued their round of mainly one-night-stands, with the exception being the summer seasons that in 1952, 1953 and 1954 were at the Palace Ballroom on the Isle of Man. Singer Mollie Gibson was added in February 1952 and stayed until June 1953. Roy Edwards left two months later to join Geraldo, whilst other changes in the vocal department saw the coming and going of Jacque Jennings, Andrew Reavley, Margaret Bond and Jackie Lee.

The band's Decca records, although not quite so frequent, were still being issued and two in 1952 (F9896 & F9900) were deliberate attempts to copy the American Billy May sound. 'Melody Maker' had put out the statement that no British band could sound as good, and the Squadronaires rose to the challenge. "Nice try" said 'Melody Maker', but "where was the guitar" and "a vocal group made up of band members was no match for The Maytimers". But they did concede that the recordings were probably the best ever produced by a British band in a British studio.

From early 1955 the band were now being billed as Ronnie Aldrich and the Squadronaires. The extended name reflected a change in musical policy, which was to adopt the current rhythm and blues influence overtaking the music industry. The Squadronaires were probably the first of the remaining big bands to bend in this direction.

With its up-to-date style the band was still acceptable for broadcasting and could be heard on various programmes including the BBC's 'Festival of Dance Music' from the Royal Festival Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1956. This show featured their new vocalist Ken Kirkham, who stayed with the band for about three years. During the year they began a regular Saturday evening Radio Luxembourg show that spotlighted Ken with fellow singer Joan Baxter.

The band continued to spend its summers on the Isle of Man, at the Palace Ballroom, and tour the rest of the year, through till the early sixties. In 1964, after a 24 year existence, economics and a changing taste in musical appreciation led to the outfit finally disbanding.

During the mid-eighties a band calling themselves The New Squadronaires led by Harry Bence (who had nothing to do with the original band) appeared

on television and produced at least one album. Following Harry's death in 1997 this New Squadronaires orchestra continued for a time under the direction of a brilliant arranger conductor Greg Francis and even more recent by singer Mark Porter. The eighties also saw the appearance of a new R.A.F. 'big-band', using the title The Royal Air Force Squadronaires Big Band. Formed from members of the Central Band of the R.A.F. their first concert, at R.A.F. station Uxbridge on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1987, was attended by several members of the original Squadronaires including Jimmy Miller who acted as guest conductor and also sang 'There's something in the air'. Building a reputation, the band has played many prestigious venues including Ronnie Scott's jazz club in May 2004.

The Squadronaires Recordings

Vocalists where known are JM = Jimmy Miller - SC = Sid Colin

BD = Beryl Davis - RE = Roy Edwards - TQ = The Quads

DECCA

(initially the band was labelled as the R.A.F Dance Orchestra)

- |        |        |   |                                    |
|--------|--------|---|------------------------------------|
| F 7480 | Jun 40 | 'With the wind and the rain in your hair (v. JM)                        | / The man who comes around (v. SC) |
| F 7572 | Jly 40 | 'By the waters of Minnetonka / The song is ended'                       |                                    |
| F 7720 | Jan 41 | 'Beat me daddy (eight to the bar) (v. SC) / The nearness of you (v. JM) |                                    |
| F 7743 | Mar 41 | 'Rockabye Bay / Constantly (both v. JM)                                 |                                    |
| F 7744 | Mar 41 | 'One look at you (v. JM) / Li'l boy love (v. SC)                        |                                    |
| F 7782 | Apl 41 | 'All of me / Indiana'   |                                    |
| F 7861 | Jun 41 | 'It's foolish but it's fun (v. SC) / Love at last (v. JM)               |                                    |
| F 7862 | Jun 41 | 'Boogie woogie bugle boy (v. SC) / There I go (v. JM)                   |                                    |
| F 7880 | Jly 41 | 'South American Way (v. SC) / Amapola (v. JM)                           |                                    |
| F 7893 | Jly 41 | 'The day it rained / Dolores (both v. JM)                               |                                    |
| F 7926 | Aug 41 | 'Down Forget-me-not Lane / Beneath the lights of home (both v. JM)      |                                    |
| F 7927 | Aug 41 | 'I wish I could fish (v. SC) / I'll think of you (v. JM)                |                                    |
| F 7967 | Sep 41 | 'I'll never let a day pass by / Sand in my shoes (both v. JM)           |                                    |
| F 7968 | Sep 41 | 'Darktown strutters ball / Drummin' man'                                |                                    |
| F 7984 | Oct 41 | 'My sister and I / Maria Elena (both v. JM)                             |                                    |
| F 7994 | Nov 41 | 'You started something / Where you are (both v. JM)                     |                                    |
| F 7995 | Nov 41 | 'Woodland symphony / Estrellita'  |                                    |
| F 8020 | Dec 41 | 'Blue champagne / Lament to love (both v. JM)                           |                                    |
| F 8048 | Jan 42 | 'My mother would love you / My paradise (both v. JM)                    |                                    |
| F 8049 | Jan 42 | 'A sinner kissed an angel / Some sunny day (both v. JM)                 |                                    |
| F 8062 | Feb 42 | 'There's something in the air /   |                                    |

		I'm coming,	<i>(from this point on the band is labelled as The Squadronaires)</i>	
Virginia'				
F 8068	Feb 42	'Russian serenade / Jealous <i>(both v. JM)</i>	F 8601	Feb 46 'It's been a long long time <i>(v. George Evans)</i> /
F 8069	Feb 42	'The man with the lollipop song / Tropical magic		I begged
<i>(both v. JM)</i>				
F 8095	Mar 42	'Chattanooga choo-choo <i>(v. SC)</i> / Bounce me brother with a	her <i>(v. JM)</i>	
solid four'			F 8602	Feb 46 'Kentucky <i>(v. GE)</i> / Nancy <i>(v. JM)</i>
F 8111	May 42	'The whistler's mother-in-law <i>(v. SC)</i> / The	F 8609	Apl 46 'It's only a paper moon / Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief
nango <i>(v. JM)</i>			<i>(both v. GE)</i>	
F 8127	Jun 42	'Way down yonder in New Orleans / That's	F 8621	May 46 'Down in Chi-chi Hotcha watchee / Gotta be this or that
a plenty'			<i>(both v. SC)</i>	
F 8139	Jun 42	'Who'll buy a rose for Margareeta? <i>(v. JM)</i> /	F 8644	Jly 46 'Saturday night at the palais / Cement mixer
		Blues in the	<i>(bot</i>	
night <i>(v. SC)</i>			<i>h v. TQ)</i>	
F 8141	Jly 42	'I remember you / Tangerine <i>(both v. JM)</i>	F 8654	Aug 46 'Money is the root of all evil / Mary Lou <i>(both v. JM &amp; TQ)</i>
F 8142	Jly 42	'South Rampart Street parade / Ringle dingle'	F 8679	Sep 46 'Any time at all <i>(v. Doreen Stephens)</i> / One-zy two-zy
F 8166	Aug 42	'Pennsylvania polka / Me and my	<i>(v. TQ)</i>	
Melinda <i>(v. JM)</i>			F 8688	Oct 46 'In love in vain <i>(v. DS)</i> / To each his own
F 8167	Aug 42	'Jersey bounce / A string of pearls'	<i>(v. JM)</i>	
F 8180	Sep 42	'I've found a new baby / Oh, you beautiful doll'	F 8711	Nov 46 'Pretending <i>(v. JM)</i> / Sally Water <i>(v. TQ)</i>
F 8194	Oct 42	'Be careful, It's my heart / Conchita Marquita Lopez	F 8731	Feb 47 'Rumours are flying <i>(v. JM)</i> / This is always <i>(v. Sally Wood)</i>
<i>(both v. JM)</i>			F 8747	Feb 47 'Five minutes more <i>(v. JM &amp; TQ)</i> / The old
F 8195	Oct 42	'Jealousy / Daybreak <i>(both v. JM)</i>		lamplighter <i>(v. JM)</i>
F 8261	Feb 43	'I've got a gal in Kalamazoo <i>(v. SC)</i> / Manhattan	F 8750	Apl 47 'Stay out of my dreams <i>(v. JM)</i> / Pompton
serenade <i>(v. JM)</i>			turnpike'	
F 8262	Feb 43	'Anchor's aweigh / Blue Lou'	F 8774	Jun 47 'That's the beginning of the end <i>(v. Denny Dennis)</i>
F 8288	Apl 43	'You're my baby / Cherokee'		/ Among my souvenirs <i>(v. Doreen Stephens)</i>
F 8315	Jun 43	'I've heard that song before / All our tomorrows	F 8792	Sep 47 'Yesterday / Temptation <i>(v. Denny Dennis)</i>
<i>(both v. JM)</i>			F 8813	Nov 47 'Barnyard reel / Minor drag'
F 8319	Jly 42	'Keep an eye on your heart <i>(v. SC)</i> / Lover's lullaby	F 8829	Jan 48 'The march of the movies / Giuseppe's band'
<i>(v. JM)</i>			F 8834	Jan 48 'You don't have to know the language <i>(v. TQ)</i> / My
F 8348	Oct 43	'Do those old eyes deceive me? / Harlem sandman	blue heaven'	
<i>(both v. JM)</i>			F 8860	Mar 48 'Ring dem bells / High society'
F 8364	Nov 43	'Cow cow boogie <i>(v. SC)</i> / Commando patrol'	F 8862	Apl 48 <i>(with Sam Browne)</i> 'The wishing waltz'
F 8386	Mar 44	'How sweet you are / Goodnight, good neighbour	F 8872	Apl 48 " " 'More than ever before'
<i>(both v. JM)</i>			F 8881	May 48 " " 'Reflections on the water'
F 8419	Apl 44	'A journey to a star / No love, no nothin' <i>(bot</i>	F 8902	Jly 48 " " 'Little white lies / Snuggled
<i>h v. BD)</i>				up on your
F 8424	May 44	'Shoo shoo baby <i>(v. SC)</i> / Is my baby blue	shoulder'	
tonight <i>(v. JM)</i>			F 8927	Jly 48 'You're driving me crazy / The shoemaker's serenade
F 8442	Aug 44	'Walk, Jenny, walk / The canteen bounce'	<i>(both v. TQ)</i>	
F 8453	Jly 44	'Jazz me blues / American patrol'	F 8939	Jly 48 <i>(with The Merry Macs)</i> 'The knick knack song / Windshiel
F 8463		'I know that you know / Reverse the charges'	d wiper'	
		<i>(scheduled but for some reason</i>	F 8961	Sep 48 'I don't want to meet any more people <i>(v. Doreen Stephens)</i> / Song of the
<i>never issued)</i>				wanderer <i>(v. TQ)</i>
F 8472	Sep 44	'Rhapsody for reeds / Concerto for drums'	F 8981	Oct 48 'Winter wonderland / Picnic in the snow <i>(bot</i>
F 8477	Oct 44	'Milkman, keep those bottles quiet <i>(v. BD)</i> /	<i>h v. TQ)</i>	
		G. I. Jive	F 8998	Nov 48 <i>(with Sam Browne)</i> 'Ah! but it happens / Down among the
<i>(v. SC)</i>			sheltering palms'	
F 8485	Dec 44	'Blues in C sharp minor / Business unusual'	F 9033	Nov 48 <i>(with Sam Browne)</i> 'Cool water'
F 8513	Apl 45	'Boston bounce / Jumpin' Jiminy'	F 9034	Nov 48 <i>(with The Merry Macs)</i> 'On a slow boat to China
F 8548	Sep 45	'Please don't say no / I should care		
<i>(both v. JM)</i>				
F 8568	Nov 45	'Mission to Moscow / C jam blues'		
F 8575	Nov 45	'Out of nowhere / My heart sings <i>(both v. Dorothy Carless)</i>		



The critic on 'Gramophone' magazine (not a publication with a leaning towards popular music and rarely kind to vocalists) said of Dorothy in June 1945 "a new name to recording and both sides are first class" and a month later "it is difficult to say enough good things about this record". Praise indeed.

The pair became a huge success on the variety circuit where they were billed as "the composer and the voice" with Billy accompanying Dot on piano (later Solovox organ) and although their private relationship was often a stormy one, to the public they were the epitome of perfection.

By the 1950's their personal relationship had become so strained (a 22 year age difference obviously didn't help) that the stage partnership ended with Dorothy, still at the top of her profession, continuing as a solo artist.

During the summer of 1952 she met a young struggling, ambitious but, as yet, unknown actor at a party and fell for him. His name was Roger Moore, 14 years her junior, and by Christmas he was appearing with her in 'Jack and the Beanstalk' at the Brixton Empress. Within months the pair were in Hollywood, where Roger's career playing roles as a handsome Englishman soon began to take off. They married at Jersey City in July 1953 and set up home in Beverly Hills. It was almost a re-run of the Reid-Squires partnership, only this time it was Dorothy who set out, using her celebrity contacts, to build up her young husband.

With films including 'The Last Time I Saw Paris', 'Interrupted Melody', 'Diane' and the T.V. series 'Ivanhoe', Roger became one of Hollywood's highest paid actors. Dot and Roger also dabbled in song-writing with 'White wings' the title song for 'Diane' and 'With all my heart I love you', both songs recorded by her on Polygon. More songs they wrote together were 'What is the reason', 'Dear to me', 'Sticks and stones' and 'Don't search for love' all recorded by her on Pye.

Although Dorothy had given up many bookings (even the possibility of replacing Patti Andrews in the famous Andrews Sisters) to help her husband achieve his success, she wasn't totally forgotten by the fans and made frequent visits to Britain to appear in variety and make the occasional record.

One, for the small Polygon label, was 'I'm walking behind you' that became her first chart success, reaching No.19. Had there been a hit record chart during the 1940's no doubt she would have had many more. Dorothy's recordings also sold well in the States where they were issued on the Coral label, and she made several television appearances over there. Dot made the big screen herself, appearing in the 1956 British film 'Stars In Your Eyes', all about an old music hall, alongside Bonar Colleano and Pat Kirkwood.

But as the fifties progressed so did Dorothy's days as a star begin to wane. An incident in 1957 shows something of her strong willed reaction to this inevitable decline. Booked to appear at the London Palladium in August she quit when the posters went up with Charlie Gracie's above hers. "British artists are being pushed out by these worthless Americans" she claimed, and she was quite right.

An uplift came with her 1961 collaboration with pianist Russ Conway (who had been Dot's accompanist on several late fifties concerts) which produced a hit recording of her composition 'Say it with flowers'. The disc was launched with a big

show-business party at her Bexley, Kent home on Sunday 11th June 1961.

Inevitably hers was a marriage doomed to fail, what wife wouldn't be a little jealous of the attention paid to her husband by his female fans and by 1960 she was 46 and he only 32. Also what man, with all those beautiful leading ladies, might not be tempted. And so it was in 1961 when his co-star on the epic 'Rape of the Sabines' was Italian actress Luisa Mattioli. Their attention for each other strayed off the film lot, and when Dorothy got to hear of it she became so depressed it seemed her singing days were over for good.

So followed several years, during which she sank more into musical obscurity. The only publicity seemed to be details of her acrimonious marriage break up and drink driving charge. Theatre bookers appeared to have forgotten her and by the end of the sixties she had not appeared on television for about nine years. So different from the days when TV spectacles were transmitted from beside the swimming pool in the garden of her home.

Never one to completely give up though, in 1968 Dorothy self financed a long player 'Say it with flowers' that was issued by President Records and this was the prelude to a number of singles on that label. On these recordings she used Nicky Welsh as musical director and he remained her MD through till the eighties. Dorothy's 1969 version of Stevie Wonder's hit song 'For once in my life' spent over ten weeks on the New Musical Express Top Thirty chart, and her 1970 recordings of 'Till' and 'My way' were both chart successes.

Now determined to prove she was far from finished, Dot used £5,000 of her own money to hire the London Palladium on Sunday 6th December 1970 for her one-woman show. Many in the profession thought she was mad, but when the 2300 tickets went on sale the response was overwhelming and they could have been sold twice over. She received standing ovations before, during and after the performance. Her voice was as rich and powerful as ever and as always Dorothy knew how to put over a song. The performance was captured for posterity by President Records.

The success of this venture encouraged Dot to repeat the event several times over, at home and abroad. In 1972 she paid almost £20,000 to stage her show at New York's Carnegie Hall. In 1974 she was back at the Palladium with a tribute concert to Billy Reid. She continued to live the life of a heiress and owned racehorses, one of which, a steeplechaser named 'Esban', won the 1973 Scottish Grand National.

But even now success didn't come without its problems, her luxurious Bexley home was completely destroyed by a fire in 1977. Unfortunately she was under-insured, but managed to find a replacement, 'North Wing Lodge' a 17 bedroom Thames-side mansion at Bray, (Dot always did things in style) from which she was eventually evicted due to mortgage arrears.

With little of her once considerable income left (much had been spent on her constant legal wrangles over various issues - for years she would sue anyone who offended her) she was declared bankrupt in October 1986. But you can never put a real trouser down and even at the age of 75 in 1989 she staged another of her shows, back on home ground in Swansea, followed by another in Brighton.

But old age and depression crept on and she became almost a recluse, moving into a cottage of a friend at Ackworth, Yorkshire from which she was eventually evicted after her friend died. Having nowhere to go, she was rescued by a long time fan Esme Coles, the owner of a fish and chip shop in the village of Trebanog near Pontypridd, who offered to let Dorothy live in her house.

A battle with cancer in 1995, that was thought to have been won, returned two years later and her long time resentment for ex-husband Roger was softened somewhat when he paid for her private hospital treatment. She had never really stopped loving him, when her Bexley home burnt down she risked life and limb to rescue just her jewelry box and a bundle of Roger's love letters.

Dorothy died on Tuesday 14th April 1998 aged 83. Her funeral at St. Mary's Church, Port Talbot a week later was attended by many stars of stage and television, as well as crowds of her fans. No doubt many expected to see Roger Moore, but he didn't show up or even send flowers. Following her wishes her coffin was taken for burial in London, at Streatham Park Cemetery alongside her parents.

Truly one of the great stars of the forties, fifties and beyond, Dorothy above all lived for her music and her fans. Those who met her found her one of the most friendly and welcoming of stars and whatever storms clouded her personal life, never were they allowed to influence the quality of her performance.

A nice touch that indicates Dorothy Squires kind nature occurred shortly before she died. A Blackpool guest house owner, Sharon Lee-Jones, was chosen to appear on television's 'Stars In Their Eyes' show, performing as Dorothy. Dot must have got to hear of it because when Sharon went to film the show in Leeds there was a bouquet of flowers waiting, with a note saying "To Sharon - good luck love - from Dorothy Squires". Unfortunately Dot never saw the result, she died before transmission date.

A sort of tribute show was performed as one of the Fringe attractions of the 1998 Edinburgh Festival. Titled 'Dorothy Squires - A One Woman Show' it was written by Mark Ryan and starred Swansea actress Gerri Smith. Many of Dot's old fans campaigned hard to have the show stopped, but it went ahead and was later performed in Cardiff to favourable reviews. "There will never be another Dorothy Squires but Gerri Smith comes very close" said the South Wales Echo and plenty of Dot's supporters had to agree.

#### Dorothy Squires Post-war Recordings

*(Most early recordings were with Billy Reid Orchestra  
Many are his own compositions)*

#### PARLOPHONE

F 2076	Jun 45	'Dreams of yesterday / Coming home'
F 2080	Jly 45	'Just a prayer away / Waiting'
F 2085	Sep 45	'The Gipsy / Safe in my arms again'
F 2101	Nov 45	'Under the willow tree /
		Goodnight till
		tomorrow'
F 2102	Dec 45	'Let the rest of the world go by /
		I'll close
		my eyes'
F 2118	Feb 46	'Yippee-olly-ay-oh / Curly top'
F 2137	Apl 46	'Memories of you / Sweet dreams to you'
F 2146	Jun 46	'It's a pity to say goodnight /

		I'd like to get
you alone'		
F 2165	Aug 46	'Laughing on the outside /
		Save a piece of wedding
cake for me'		
F 2175	Oct 46	'Old friends are golden friends /
		There's a fairy in
my garden'		
F 2182	Nov 46	'Three beautiful words of love /
		My man didn't
come back'		
F 2196	Jan 47	'For sentimental reasons /
		I get along with
somebody else'		
F 2208	Apl 47	'When China boy meets China girl /
		The old apple tree will
bloom again'		
F 2225	Jun 47	'Unchangeable you / All over again'
F 2244	Oct 47	'Danger ahead /
		My first love, my last love,
for always'		
F 2257	Dec 47	'I'm gonna hold you in my arms /
		I'm in the mood
for love'		
R 3092	Mar 48	'A tree in the meadow /
		Kiss me once, kiss
me more'		
		COLUMBIA
DB 2418	Jun 48	'After all / Reflections on the water'
DB 2425	Jly 48	'Tell me a story / Lonesome lane'
DB 2439	Sep 48	'Anything I dream is possible / Break my
		heart
		and say you
love me'		
DB 2455	Nov 48	'So tired / Mother's day'
DB 2499	Mar 49	'Here comes me /
		It's springtime down
lovers lane'		
DB 2516	May 49	'If you were here /
		I'd give the world to you
sweetheart'		
DB 2537	Jun 49	'Maybe someday / In all the world'
DB 2573	Sep 49	'Our love story / Too-whit too-whoo'
DB 2605	Nov 49	'Snowy white snow and jingle bells /
		Say goodnight but not
goodbye'		
DB 2610	Dec 49	'We all have a song in our hearts /
		You shouldn't have
kissed me'		
DB 2659	Mar 50	'Do I worry / On the sunny side of the
		street'
DB 2691	Jun 50	'Just like a gramophone record /
		Halfway to
heaven'		
DB 2722	Aug 50	'I remember the cornfields / Yes I'll be
		there'
DB 2766	Dec 50	'Once in a while / Baby come home'
DB 2855	May 51	'Life's desire / Be my love'
DB 2897	Aug 51	'My resistance is low / I'll never know
		why'
DB 2950	Nov 51	'At the end of the day / And so to sleep
		again'
		(acc by Philip
		Green orch)
DB 3005	Feb 52	'Mistakes / The little white cloud that
		cried'
DB 3042	Apl 52	'Any time / I don't care'
DB 3046	Apl 52	'Unforgettable / The old soft shoe
		(with
		G.H.Elliott)
DB 3086	Jun 52	'Be anything, but be mine /
		To be
worthy of you'		
DB 3163	Oct 52	'Faith / Snowflakes'
DB 3231	Feb 53	'Legend of the well / Maid of the valley'

#### DECCA

F 10303	May 54	'Eventide / Set me free'
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## POLYGON

- P 1068 Apl 53 'I'm walking behind you /  
Is there any room in  
your heart'  
P 1076 Sep 53 'From your lips to the ears of God /  
Sorrent  
o and you'  
P 1077 Nov 53 'If you love me / Things go wrong'  
P 1079 Oct 53 'It's the talk of the town / Lost and found'  
P 1096 Feb 54 'Romany violins / Changing partners' (*acc  
by*  
*Tony*  
*Osborne orch*)  
P 1149 Jan 55 (*with Radio Revellers*) 'White wings /  
With all  
my heart'  
P 1162 Apl 55 " " " 'When I grow too old  
to  
dream / Blue,  
blue, blue'  
PYE NIXA  
N 15010 Oct 55 'In all the world /  
When you lose the one  
you love'  
N 15045 Mar 56 'Without you / I saw the look in your eyes  
(*with Bonar  
Colleano*)  
N 15052 May 56 'What is the reason / Dear to me'  
N 15075 Nov 56 'Come home to my arms / Someone to  
love'  
N 15082 Feb 57 'The banana boat song / Precious love'  
N 15154 Jly 58 'Torremolinos / This is my mothers day'  
N 15199 May 59 'Sticks and stones / Don't search for love'

## COLUMBIA

- DB 3985 Aug 57 'Our song / Song of the valley' (*acc by  
Tony*  
*Osborne orch*)  
DB 4070 Feb 58 'A secret that's never been told /  
Bewitched'  
DB 4665 Jun 61 (*with Russ Conway*) 'Say it with flowers /  
Roses of  
Picardy'  
DB 4775 62 (*with Russ Conway*) 'Blue snowfall /  
Talk it over with  
someone'  
DB 4833 62 'Whoever / How deep is the ocean'  
DB 4942 63 'Moonlight and roses / Are you'  
DB 7009 63 'Bless your heart my darling /  
Once  
upon a time'  
DB 7104 63 'I won't cry anymore / Red the rose'  
DB 7243 64 'Look around / Two strangers met'  
DB 7872 66 'Someone other than me / The call of  
spring'

## DECCA

- F 11262 Jly 60 'This place called home / Trust in me'  
F 12159 Jun 65 'Have I waited too long / Goodbye'  
F 13720 Aug 77 'If I had a chance / Passing strangers'

## PRESIDENT

- PT 188 69 'When there's love in your heart /  
Where  
can I go'  
PT 213 69 'Point of no return / Roses of Picardy'  
PT 237 69 'Your flowers arrived too late / Red the  
rose'  
PT 267 69 'For once in my life / Our garden  
PT 281 70 'Till / The seasons of' (*acc by Nicky  
Welsh orch*)  
PT 305 70 'My way / With all my heart'  
PT 330 70 'If you love me (I won't care) /

the rules'

PT 349 70 'Life goes on / It can't be done'

E.M.I.

EMI 2039 73 'How deep is the ocean / Solitude's  
my home'

PYE

7N45384 Jly 74 'Something greater / Find a way  
back'7N45446 Mar 75 'The impossible dream / Eyes of a  
man'

ESBAN

ES 9 Mar 84 'I am what I am / A legend in my  
time'ES 10 Jly 85 'You'll never walk alone / I'm glad there  
is you'

## Rosemary SQUIRES

Rosemary can claim the distinction of being probably the only singer to turn down the chance of becoming a vocalist with the legendary Ted Heath Orchestra, the kind of job any singer of the period would have given a right arm for.

Born Joan Rosemary Yarrow in Bristol on 7th December 1928, into a family already bitten by the show business bug with her mother a soubrette and an aunt in silent films, Rosemary made her own radio debut aged only twelve on a West Country children's programme reciting Christopher Robin.

Then followed several years in which she left school and tried a number of different jobs. Adopting her mother's maiden name, she sang part time evenings with local bands, until April 1948 when she joined Benny Daniels and the Blue Rockets Dance Orchestra on a tour of Germany. But back in England booking were slow and she was laid off.

Next came a spell with the Tommy Sampson Band, but it wasn't a happy relationship, this was a progressive Kenton style outfit and as she has since admitted "I was just a square peg and an unpopular one at that - when Tommy fired me I just went home and had a breakdown".

After two years away from the business, Rosemary slowly eased herself back via small jazz clubs mainly in the Salisbury district. One evening she was heard by pianist and broadcaster Steve Race and a BBC airing resulted. During 1951 she was the resident vocalist on a late night radio series 'Moonglow' with an orchestra led by Don Caple, staff arranger at BBC West Region. More radio and television bookings soon followed.

In January 1952 she joined the Birmingham based Arthur Rowberry Band, but once again she was struggling as none of the band-parts were in her key. After another uncomfortable period, she gave up and went home again.

It took quite a while for her to build up her confidence again, with further one-off club bookings, until by the mid-fifties she had found a band she felt happy with and they with her, the Johnnie Moss Orchestra at Swindon. It was while Rosemary was resident there that Kathy Lloyd left Ted Heath, and encouraged by Johnnie and his boys she sent a demo recording to the Heath office.

Ted's initial reply was favourable, saying her's was the best voice he'd considered for the job so far.

Holding her breath waiting it seemed ages before he asked her to come up to London for an audition. Finally he did and it turned out to be quite an unusual one too. At the time the Heath band had a regular Saturday midday broadcast and on 10th September 1955, Rosemary, un-named, was on it. Ted used the introduction "You have heard the boys (Bobby Britton and Peter Lowe) and if I had a girl singer she might sound something like this" following which Rosemary sang 'Imagination'. After the show Ted offered her the job.

This should have been the fairy tale come true, but Rosemary hesitated, if she was good enough for Ted Heath perhaps she was good enough to make it on her own. Conceited maybe, but there was only one way to find out and she was willing to risk everything taking the chance, so she turned him down. She applied to the BBC for solo work, but in their usual obtuse manner they replied that she would have to wait and take an audition, even though she had often broadcast for West Region, many of them networked over the Light Programme.

Undaunted she approached the record companies and was rewarded when Decca signed her up and in January 1956 released her first single 'Band of gold'. It didn't sell too well, although she got good reviews for her individual style. A follow up disc 'You can't run away from it' did little better and Decca lost interest, saying her voice was too musical and not commercial enough. This was probably always Rosemary's biggest handicap; she was just too good for pop songs.

In November 1955 she appeared on Ralph Reader's AR-TV new-faces show 'Chance of a Lifetime' and was back on it again the following February. The same month Rosemary was plugging her new record on BBC TV's 'Off the Record and Jack Jackson's 'Record Show'. From April 1956 she was featured on Geraldo's 'Tip Top Tunes' radio series with fellow singer Roy Edwards.

A natural comic and mimic it's no surprise she was chosen to play comedian Reg Dixon's wife, a mainly non-singing role, in an ITV domestic comedy series 'Let's Stay at Home', that began in May 1956.

During 1957 Rosemary made a few music publisher demo discs and this led to an offer from M.G.M. Records for her to record some songs primarily for the American market, that were released on the album 'My Love Is A Wanderer'. An E.P. version (MGM EP 640) with the songs 'My love is a wanderer', 'Summer is a comin' in', 'Just another day wasted away' and 'April heart' was later available in the UK.

Not happy with her appearance on television she decided to change the shape of her nose, "it stuck out too much" she said, and had it surgically reduced. Be it coincidence or not more TV work followed, 'Box Office' for ITV on 15th September 1957, 'The Late Show' again for ITV on 25th January 1958, the first anniversary edition of BBC TV's 'Six Five Special' on 22nd February and ITV's 'Here's Humph' on 21st March plus others.

From January to March 1958 Rosemary toured in a stage version of 'Six Five Special' with Don Lang and his Frantic Five, The Kenny Baker Half Dozen and Jimmy Jackson's Skiffle group. In April she began her own late Friday night radio series, backed by the Jack Emblow Quartet and on alternate Saturdays was on ITV's 'Before Midnight' show. She also did several jazz programmes and sang on the BBC's 'Tonight' TV show each evening of the week

beginning Monday 30th June. Rosemary also made several appearances on the 'Black and White Minstrel Show'.

1958 found her back on record, now on the H.M.V. label, with the film theme 'Happy is the Bride', but her output still continued to be mainly non commercial material. As she told Chris Hayes of the Melody Maker "I won't sing rubbish, songs must be good lyrically and musically or I don't want to know". Although she did let her hair down on a couple of Columbia discs, but hid behind the pseudonym of Joanne and the Streamliners.

An unusual task on Tuesday 21st April 1959 was at The Needlewoman shop at 146 Regent Street, signing copies of a knitting pattern. Rosemary was pictured on its cover wearing a hand knitted sweater. The same month found her on children's TV with Lenny the Lion and on Easter Monday in a TV musical play 'A Sparrow In Fleet Street' with Charlie Chester. On tour she was working with Robert Earl and Ken Dodd.

For the 1959 summer season she joined the television 'Army Game' team of Alfie Bass, Bill Fraser and Norman Rossington in a stage version, at Blackpool's Hippodrome Theatre. Later in the year she appeared in Brighton Hippodrome's 60th Anniversary Show, with David Hughes, Tommy Cooper and the Three Monarchs.

Early in 1960 she began her own 20 week series for AR-TV, but had to give it up in June when she went into hospital with acute anemia. Back in variety in 1961 Rosemary played six weeks with Alma Cogan, The Dallas Boys, Morecambe & Wise and Billy Dainty in Manchester Palace's 'Spring Show', followed by a summer season at Llandudno Pier Pavilion. She continued to delight audiences on summer seasons on Jersey and resorts like Great Yarmouth, Blackpool, Clacton and Skegness through to the eighties. She also became a regular trouper in pantomime.

TV commercials too became a nice source of income with her 'Hands that do dishes' for Fairy Liquid probably one of the best known. Not just a star at home, Rosemary also made quite a career out of singing commercials for the American media and guested on several TV shows over there. She admits that she has earned more from jingles than from singing live to an audience, and it's much easier work. Despite this she still reckons that during her fifty plus years in the business she has made more broadcasts than any other female singer.

Rosemary married for the first time, at the age of 62, on 22nd April 1991 at Trinity Chapel, Salisbury, to widower and retired police officer Frank Lockyer who had been an admirer since her Salisbury jazz club days.

Still sounding as good as ever, she was on a radio concert 'Easy Does It' with the BBC Radio Big Band, broadcast from Salisbury Cathedral on Saturday 19th March 1994. She still sings with big bands, doing concerts with the Midland Jazz Orchestra, 'Miller' tribute bands and the BBC Big Band. She has recently been touring with Maxine Daniels and Barbara Jay in the show 'The Ella Fitzgerald Songbook', that takes the best from Ella's many recorded 'Songbooks' giving them a new lease of life. Backed by former Heath saxophonist Tommy Whittle and a rhythm section the result is available on a Spotlite CD. Another new venture is 'Day by Day' a tribute to the life and songs of Doris Day, on which she is partnered by Dennis Lotis.



# Rosemary Squires Recordings

DECCA

- F 10685 Jan 56 'Band of gold / Where you are'  
 F 10812 Nov 56 'You can't run away from it / Love is  
 here to stay'  
 H.M.V.
- POP 462 Feb 58 'Happy is the bride / Give me the simple  
 life'  
*(acc by Frank Cordell orch)*  
 POP 541 Oct 58 'There goes my lover / Please be kind'  
 POP 628 May 59 'Must be catching / Love is a simple  
 thing'  
 POP 897 61 'Our little doggie ran away / Things are  
 looking up'  
 POP 1038 62 'You got / For every man there's a  
 woman'  
 POP 1097 62 'Everything's coming up roses / It had to  
 be you'  
 POP 1209 63 'The mirror / Candy and cake'  
 POP 1288 64 'Bluesette / Nothing's changed'

COLUMBIA *(as Joanne and the Streamliners)*

- DB 4689 61 'Frankfurter sandwiches / Pachalafaka'  
 DB 4809 62 'Everybodys doin' the twist / Do  
 something'

DECCA

- F 12587 67 'Once there was you / Ridiculous'

COLUMBIA

- DB 8267 67 'If he walked into my life / Maybe you'll  
 be there'

## Cyril STAPLETON

Son of a Nottingham building worker, Cyril was born 31<sup>st</sup> December 1914. Given an old fiddle as a lad, by the age of twelve he had made his first broadcast, on solo violin from Nottingham's 5NG radio station. Musical scholarships took him to Trinity College and Czechoslovakia. While studying in London during 1932 Cyril had a spell in Henry Hall's BBC dance orchestra and made his first recordings with them. But most early work found him back home playing in local cinema groups accompanying silent films.

By 1937, after a tour of South Africa with Jack Payne's band, Cyril was leading his own eight piece at Fischer's Restaurant in London's New Bond Street. In 1939 a larger outfit he assembled for Jack Hylton at the London Casino was short lived when war intervened and the venue closed. After a few months with Billy Ternent's BBC orchestra Cyril joined the R.A.F. where he played in a number of service bands and toured America as a violinist with the R.A.F. Symphony Orchestra.

Following his demob in December 1945 he worked with the bands of Fred Hartley, Geraldo, The London Studio Players and just about every large classical orchestra till in July 1946 he went back, leading an eleven piece, to Fischer's Restaurant, broadcasting from there every Tuesday night. Decca Records signed him up and so began a long association with the label.

In June 1947 Cyril moved down the road to The Embassy Club, with Dick James and a newcomer Pam Deeming as vocalists. Radio work continued on the likes of 'Band Parade', 'On The Sweeter Side' and 'Morning Music' and from 2nd February 1948 his own series 'Cyril Stapleton Entertains' with songs from Sally Douglas and Denny Dennis (Dick James was unable to be on this series because he was already committed to 'Monday Night at Eight'), plus a guest artist, who on that first show was comedienne-impersonator Beryl Orde. She was in fact Mrs. Stapleton, having married Cyril in December 1939.

Another series 'Serenade' followed in April 1948. Broadcast alternate Mondays it featured Cyril's orchestra of five saxes, one trumpet and rhythm augmented with 14 strings, with vocals from Sally Douglas, Dick James and Irish tenor Joseph McNally. During that summer Cyril took his band on a tour of holiday resorts including Weston-super-Mare, Ramsgate and Great Yarmouth. They also played a three week season at Green's Playhouse Glasgow. By now Pearl Carr had joined Dick James as the resident vocalists.

Cyril had intended to return to club work after this short tour but, due to its success, decided to stay 'on the road', spending much time around London due to his radio commitments. These included, from January 1949, a new Saturday evening series 'Golden Slipper Club' where he shared the bandstand with Edmundo Ros. On Radio Luxembourg there was the regular Sunday 'Treasure Hunt' sponsored by Lever, the makers of 'Whisk'. He also did a series for Horlicks. On Tuesdays he was back on the BBC with 'Hit Parade' that featured his 35 piece string orchestra and on Thursdays he joined Reggie Goff and the Tito Burns Sextet on 'Let's Make Music'.

Even with this workload the orchestra managed to fit in a nine week season at Brighton's Aquarium Ballroom from June 1949, immediately followed by another three weeks at Green's Playhouse, Glasgow. Changes in the vocal department had seen Dick James give way to Bob Dale and an unknown lass from Glasgow, Jean Campbell, was signed in February to replace Pearl Carr.

1949 also brought sadness for Cyril, his wife Beryl collapsed shortly after appearing on a 'Music Hall' show and later died. On Monday 8th January 1951 he married 22 year old Sheila Shardlow the daughter of a Lt. Col. who had served in India, where she had been born. He did the 900 mile round trip from Edinburgh, where the band was appearing, to make the Paddington Register Office ceremony.

The early fifties usually found the Stapleton band on tour, while regularly hopping back to London for their many broadcasts. These included 'Let's Make Music' and 'Variety Bandbox' where they replaced the Billy Ternent band (who'd been on the show seven years) in September 1951. For two months from March 1951 the orchestra followed Ted Heath into a resident season at London's Savoy Hotel. Vocals were now being handled by Dave Carey, Jean Campbell and The Staplejacks.

Now leading what was being billed as "Britain's biggest dance band" the 20 piece outfit played the early 1951 summer season at the Palace Ballroom on the Isle of Man, followed by two weeks at Blackpool's Winter Gardens. Each Sunday they had

to travel back to London for their 'Variety Bandbox' duties.

Despite Cyril's continued singles output from Decca, the company refused to finance the recording of a long player. Convinced of the important future in albums, Cyril went ahead and put up the money to record an LP himself. Entitled 'Paris after Dark', he sold it to M.G.M. for release in America and shortly afterwards Decca bought it for issue in this country. Sales were so good they followed up with 'Italy after Dark' and 'New York after Dark', and from then on his main recording output was on albums. In 1957 the BBC banned 12 tracks from his LP 'Music for a Starry Night' because they were up-tempo versions of classical pieces.

Even so the singles continued, with the March 1955 issue of 'Elephant tango' giving Cyril his first foothold on the Hit Parade'. And as one good thing leads to another, his very next disc 'Blue star' (the theme from the American TV series 'Medic' - a U.S instrumental hit for Les Baxter) almost took him to the top of the tree, rising to No.2 during its twelve weeks on the charts and selling a reported million copies. While handing out praise we mustn't overlook the excellent vocal on this song by Julie Dawn. Other recordings to reach the chart were 'The Italian theme' and 'The happy whistler' both in 1956 and Leroy Anderson's 'Forgotten dreams' in 1957. 'The Italian theme' (literally - it began life over there as 'Mambo caliente') made the Top Thirty in America too, as did the paddy-wack 'Children's marching song' from the film 'Inn of the Sixth Happiness'.

Cyril's outfit was now regarded as one of our most popular broadcasting bands and from January 1952 began a new monthly radio series 'Hit Parade', that featured Eve Boswell, Carole Carr, Dick James, Lee Lawrence and The Stargazers. But there were rumours of something going on at the BBC and that Cyril was involved. There were tales of 'secret' auditions being held in Studio One at Aeolian Hall in New Bond Street - it was opened as a concert hall in 1904 and taken over as a studio by the BBC during the war.

Of course there was definitely something going on, Cyril had been approached by the BBC to form a new radio big-band to rival anything that was available anywhere. The secret auditions were being held by him to recruit the 18 plus top class musicians who would make up this all star "show" band.

Despite numerous denials, the BBC finally made an official announcement at the end of July heralding the forthcoming arrival of the BBC Show Band. Cyril announced that he would be disbanding his touring orchestra on 7th September 1952 to take up leadership of this new band.

The BBC Show Band's first broadcast was on the Light Programme at 9.15pm on Thursday 2nd October 1952, the beginning of a commitment that soon saw them on air three times every week. Vocalists on the early shows were Lee Lawrence, Jean Campbell, Louise Traill and Johnny Johnston with his Johnston Brothers and Johnston Singers. Produced by the excellent Johnnie Stewart, the BBC show band shows soon became a national favourite.

The band gave its first public performance on Sunday 25th January 1953 at the Albert Hall, as part of a jazz concert that included the Christie Brothers and Freddy Randall's Band. This was not an official appearance and the BBC in its usual manner issued

a statement saying "that although members of the BBC Show Band may be appearing at the concert they will not be appearing in that capacity". Later in the year the band did some one-night-stands at Mecca ballrooms. In September 1955 with the new competition from commercial television and its more entertaining style, BBC TV began their own Show Band series, a fortnightly Sunday show with Janie Marden, Ronnie Hilton and The Stargazers.

The band featured in a Cinemascope film shown at Odeon cinemas and appeared on the November 1955 Royal Variety Performance at London's Victoria Palace. ITV had hoped to televise this show but were turned down by the Lord Chamberlain's office. The 1960 variety show was the first one to be seen on television. Cyril, with his growing family (a daughter in 1952 and twin boys in 1954), was voted by readers of The Daily Mail as Britain's most popular musical entertainer in their 1955 national Radio & TV Awards poll.

Even though it was still tops with listeners, all good things must come to an end and after a very successful run of almost five years the BBC pulled the plug on the Show Band in 1957, with its last broadcast going out on Friday 28th June. Cyril held a farewell party for all concerned at the Cafe Royal on Saturday the 29th. But this wasn't really the end and the new Cyril Stapleton Show Band Show began a countrywide tour with a TV spectacular celebrating 21 years of BBC television on 7th September 1957. On tour with the band were singers Marion Ryan, Ronnie Hilton and Group One and to add the comedy and compere the show there was a new comedian Des O'Connor. From the 9th January 1958 the band began a series of BBC TV shows and in April was on the opening programme from the corporation's new Birmingham studios.

For the summer season the band was providing the 'show' at Scarborough's Futurist Theatre (recently converted, by the sea-side show people Catlins, from a cinema), with Ronnie Hilton, Penny Nicholls, Norman Vaughan, The Southlanders and The Top Ten Lovelies. When the Scarborough season was over Cyril and the band set off on a 15 week ballroom tour supported by The Kentones vocal group. On the 3rd November they were at the London Coliseum on another Royal Variety Performance. This was the show that launched Roy Castle into his very successful career. On Christmas Day Cyril made his debut on commercial television with his Show Band taking the coveted spot, a full hour proceeding the Queen's speech at 3.00pm.

From 2nd January 1959 the band began a sweet-music series 'The Melody Dances' on the ITV network with singers Michael Desmond, Vicki Anderson and Jo Shelton. A very popular show, it returned for a number of series. From June Cyril was back at Scarborough, in Bernard Delfont's 'Big Show' with The Frazer Hayes Four and Frankie Howerd. In 1960 the show was at Weymouth Pavilion with Benny Hill and with their current singers Ray Merrill and Judy Jones the band had a new Saturday lunchtime radio series called 'Swingalong'. Cyril also had a spell as presenter of 'Housewives Choice'.

Cyril took on his first London ballroom residency when from June 1961 he filled in for Joe Loss, taking a 12 week summer break from the Hammersmith Palais. It must have been to his liking - he said he was glad to give up touring - for he then signed a contract with Mecca and in January 1962 took up

residency at the Strand Lyceum. In 1966 Cyril became recording manager at Pye Records. Cyril died following a heart attack on 25th February 1974. He was only 59.

Cyril Stapleton Orchestra Recordings

*Vocalists where known are DJ = Dick James - SD = Sally Douglas - PC = Pearl Carr - BD = Bob Dale - JC = Jean Campbell -*

*TS = The Staplejacks - PKS = Peter Knight Singers  
DC = Dave Carey - TC = The Clubmen*

DECCA

F 8736 Feb 47 'Zip-a-dee-doo-dah (v. Tom Henry & quartet) /

Sooner or later (v. Denny

Vaughan)

F 8752 Apr 47 'Hawaiian war chant / Sleepy serenade'

F 8775 Jun 47 'Who do you love, I hope (v. Tom Henry) /  
They say it's

wonderful (v. DJ)

F 8793 Sep 47 'Moonlight serenade / Tonight (Perfidia)'

F 8809 Oct 47 'A garden in the rain /  
An apple blossom wedding

(both v. DJ)

F 8822 Dec 47 'How are things in Glocca Morra? (v. DJ) /  
Fine things

(v. SD)

F 8929 Feb 49 'A tree in the meadow /  
I'd give a million

tomorrows'

F 8941 Aug 48 (CS Swing Serenaders with Reggie Goff)  
'When you're in love / I don't care

what they say'

F 8946 Aug 48 'The end of a wonderful day (v. DJ) /  
P. S. I love

you (v. PC)

F 9015 Nov 48 'We just couldn't say goodbye (v. Jo  
Shelton) /

Isn't it romantic (v.

DJ & PC)

F 9040 Dec 48 (with Reggie Goff) 'All's well that ends  
well /

In

my dreams'

F 9043 Dec 48 (with Pearl Carr) 'Say that you're mine /  
Anything I dream is

possible'

F 9055 Jan 49 'Brush those tears from your eyes  
(v. PC & Stapletones) / Welcome

little stranger

(v. DJ &

Stapletones)

F 9072 Jan 49 (with Reggie Goff) 'The crystal gazer /  
I love you so

much it hurts'

F 9096 Mar 49 " " 'Be true / Maria mia'

F 9113 Apr 49 (with The Stapletones) 'Memories /  
By the light of the

silvery moon'

F 9134 May 49 'The corn belt symphony (v. The Keynotes)  
/

Scalawag

(v. PC)

F 9154 Jun 49 'The kiss waltz / Dusk (both v. BD)

F 9176 Jun 49 (with Reggie Goff) 'The streets of Laredo /  
M

y bolero'

F 9286 Dec 49 'Shawl of Galway Grey (v. BD) /  
Hop Scotch polka (v.

BD & JC)

F 9330 Feb 50 'Dear hearts and gentle people /  
I'll string along with you

(both v. BD)

F 9368 Mar 50 'Why not now (v. JC & BD) /  
At the Bal

Tabarin (v. BD)

F 9470 Aug 50 'Candy and cake (v. JC & TS) /

One wonderful

morning (v. BD)

F 9471 Aug 50 'In a boat on a lake with my darling (v. BD)  
/

Chase me, Charlie (v.

JC & TS)

F 9482 Sep 50 'I only have eyes for you /  
Lullaby of the leaves

(both v. BD)

F 9576 Dec 50 'Orange coloured sky (v. JC) /  
All my love

(v. BD)

F 9581 Jan 51 'Beloved, be faithful (v. BD & TS) /  
Thinking of you

(v. BD)

F 9615 Mar 51 'The roving kind (v. DC & TS) /  
Be my love

(v. BD)

F 9616 Mar 51 'Get out those old records (v. JC & BD) /  
Zing zing zoom zoom (v.

BD & TS)

F 9648 Apr 51 'At the close of a long, long day (v. JC &  
DC) /

Teasin' (v. Jo

Shelton)

F 9648 Apr 51 'A penny a kiss - a penny a hug (v. JC &  
DC) /

As long as the river flows

on (v. DC)

F 9705 Jly 51 'Pretty eyed baby (v. JC & PKS) /  
Cider night (v. DC

& PKS)

F 9729 Sep 51 'A little rag doll (v. TS) /  
Lonely little robin (v.

JC & TS)

F 9732 Sep 51 'Alice in Wonderland selection (two parts)  
(v. JC, DC &

PKS)

F 9735 Sep 51 'The good ship Venus (v. DC & TS) /  
Would you

(v. JC)

F 9777 Oct 51 'Belle belle, my liberty belle /  
Christopher

Columbus (both v. The

Stargazers)

F 9800 Dec 51 (with The Stargazers) 'I want to be near  
you /

The flying

Dutchman'

F 9880 Mar 52 'Hit Parade Medley : If you go / Just one  
more

chance (v. DC) / Jealousy / Be mine

tonight /

Allentown jail (v. JC) /

Greensleeves'

F 9901 May 52 'Boogie woogie march /  
What might have been

(v. JC)

F 9939 Jly 52 'Would you / Waltz without words'  
F 9961 Dec 52 (with The Johnston Brothers) 'The secret of

our

love / Farewell

and adieu'

F 9974 Oct 52 'Meet Mr. Callaghan /  
A little bit of

sugar (v. TC)

F 10039 Jan 53 'Barrels 'n barrels of roses / The glow  
worm

(bot

h v. TC)

F 10104 May 53 'Seven lonely days / Gomen nasai  
(Forgive me)'

F 10119 Jun 53 'The little white house / Street of  
shadows'

F 10199 Nov 53 'Skin deep / Lazy mambo'

F 10208 Dec 53 'Theme from The Man Between /  
Carnavalito'

F 10293 May 54 'There'll be no tear-drops tonight /  
Long distance love

(both v. TC)

F 10308 Jun 54 'Song of the high seas / Guadal canal march'  
 F 10310 Jun 54 (with *The Stargazers*) 'The man with the banjo /  
 Good  
 wholesome beer'  
 F 10313 Jun 54 'Lester leaps in / Midnight sun'  
 F 10317 Jun 54 (with *Jimmy Young*) 'Little things mean a lot  
 / Here'  
 F 10322 Jly 54 'Strings on parade / For always'  
 F 10359 Aug 54 'Eleanora / Ava'  
 F 10366 Aug 54 'The goodnight waltz / Waltz of love'  
 F 10379 Sep 54 (with *The Stargazers*) '365 kisses /  
 I need  
 you now'  
 F 10456 Feb 55 'Tango mambo / Mexican madness'  
 F 10470 Feb 55 'Time after time (v. *The Four Eves*) /  
 Fanfa  
 re boogie'  
 F 10488 Mar 55 'Elephant tango / Gabrielle'  
 F 10559 Jly 55 'Blue star (v. *Julie Dawn*) /  
 Honey babe (v. *Gordon Langford*)'  
 F 10638 Oct 55 'The bonnie blue gal / When day is done'  
 F 10686 Feb 56 'Donkey tango / Magic fingers'  
 F 10703 Mar 56 'The Italian theme / Come next spring'  
 F 10735 May 56 'The happy whistler (with *Desmond Lane on*  
*penny whistle*) /  
 Tiger tango'  
 F 10793 Oct 56 'Highway patrol / Maids of Madrid'  
 F 10850 Feb 57 'The man who plays the mandolino /  
 The red  
 balloon'  
 F 10883 May 57 'Chantez, chantez / Rock, fiddle, rock'  
 F 10912 Jly 57 'Forgotten dreams / It's not for me to say'  
 F 10924 Aug 57 (with *Winifred Atwell*) 'The hope waltz'  
 F 10979 Jan 58 'Monday blues (two parts)'  
 F 11013 Apl 58 'Teenage lullaby / Fiddle-delphia'  
 F 11018 May 58 (with *David Whitfield*)  
 'On the street  
 where you live'  
 F 11049 Aug 58 'Volare / Which end bites'  
 F 11094 Dec 58 'The Inn of the Sixth Happiness (v. *Bill Elliott*) /  
 Nick nack  
 paddy wack'  
 F 11180 Nov 59 'North West Frontier / Third Man theme bounce'  
 F 11257 Jly 60 'Havana merry-go-round / Doll dance'  
 F 11373 Jly 61 'Polynesian melody / Pepito'  
 F 11443 Mar 62 'Afrikaan beat / My sad girl'  
 F 11558 Dec 62 'The hipster / Slocotion'  
 F 11631 Apl 63 'Doin' the beeje / Golli golli'  
 PYE  
 7N17040 66 'The Power Game theme / Lil'  
 7N17052 66 'March of the diddy people / The Spied theme'  
 7N17090 66 'Softly in my dreams / March of the Tijuana'  
 7N17141 66 'Slippery Sam / Jack knife'  
 7N17240 67 'Countess of Hong Kong / This is my song'  
 7N17397 67 'That's me over here / The flower girls'  
 7N17629 68 'The lonely sea and the sky / The Forsythe Saga'  
 7N17807 69 'Department S theme /  
 W. Somerset Maughan TV  
 theme'  
 7N17843 69 'Once upon a time in the west / Hurry to me'

## The Stardusters

A co-operative dance band formed in 1946 when five members of the Bert Messeder band, resident at

Mecca's Paramount Dance Salon in London's Tottenham Court Road, walked out following a pay dispute. Deciding to form their own outfit they recruited a further five players and under the direction of tenor-sax and accordion playing George Birch, calling themselves The Stardusters, opened at the Stage Door Canteen in August. Soon they were playing ballrooms up and down the country.

Their first broadcasts came with three late Friday night airings during October, that included vocalist Terry Devon who also joined them on tour. 1947 included a summer season at the Samson & Hercules Ballroom in Norwich and a number of 'Music While You Work' broadcasts. Vocalists progressed through Lynda Russell, Maureen McIver and Jean Barrie.

The band along with Terry Devon and Alan Dean appeared in the 1948 Terry-Thomas film 'Melody In the Dark'. Now led by saxist Andy Wilson The Stardusters appear to have broken up by the end of the year.

George Birch had parted company with the outfit in October 1947 to concentrate on his instrument and build his reputation around town. Leaving the RAF in 1946, aged 24, he had played a spell at Murray's Club before his year with the Stardusters. He then played London clubs in the bands of Paul Adam and Nat Allen, before spending the summer of 1949 in Mantovani's orchestra at Butlin's Filey camp. George then returned to band-leading and one of his old haunts, forming a new 10 piece, resident for many years at the Samson & Hercules Ballroom, Norwich.

In the early fifties Don Smith was leading a band named The Stardusters at the Astoria Ballroom, Nottingham.

## The Stargazers

"The Stargazers are on the air .....", and that was how they introduced themselves in song on scores of radio variety shows throughout the fifties. They were probably the most popular vocal group of that decade, with their close harmony routines hard to beat.

Formed in 1949, principally for broadcast and recording work, the original line up was Dick James, Cliff Adams, Ronnie Milne, Fred Datchler and Marie Benson. The group's first airing came in June with several more following in quick succession. Before the year was out they were the regular vocal support for 'Family Hour' on Mondays and 'Let's Make Music' an afternoon series on Fridays with Paul Fenoulhet and his Orchestra. They also featured on comedian Derek Roy's 'Hip Hip Hoo Roy', show that also included Spike Milligan, Robert Moreton and Cherry Lind with the Stanley Black Orchestra.

One of the first to see The Stargazers' potential was pianist Billy Thorburn and he used them on several of his Organ Dance Band & Me sides for Parlophone. Other early recordings were for the fledgling Polygon company backing Petula Clark on her version of the current big hit songs 'Music, music, music' and 'Silver dollar', an issue that only saw the light of day in Australia.

All group members had other commitments so live appearances were always going to be rare, the first I'm aware of being a Sunday concert at Leicester's De Montfort Hall with Lew Stone's Band on 12th March 1950. By now Bob Brown had

replaced Dick James (who is credited with getting the group together in the first place).

As I've mentioned, all The Stargazers had their other 'day' jobs, newcomer Bob Brown, from Sheffield, had played cornet as a lad and more recently trumpet in the bands of Jack Jackson and Lou Preager among others before illness forced him to give up touring. He was currently on the staff of Edward Cox Music Co. Fred Datchler, a Londoner, had travelled across India, Burma and Ceylon during the war with an R.A.F. entertainment unit. He was now a saxophonist with Felix King and his Music. Ronnie Milne and Cliff Adams, both instrumentalists, were arrangers with Ted Heath and his Music. Australian Marie Benson was also a very busy solo vocalist.

Big radio favourites, the early fifties found them in several series including 'Top Score', 'These Were The Hits', 'Home At Eight', 'Top Flight', 'The Show Band Show' and the prelude to the later 'Goon Show', 'Crazy People'. One important show that did much to enhance their popularity was the Sunday evening series 'Calling All Forces' on which Ted Ray and Petula Clark sent greetings and song to servicemen at home and overseas. It was on this show that The Stargazers first used their distinctive introduction.

On Monday 1st June 1953 they were on a special Coronation celebration show 'As Millions Cheer' with Lita Roza, Dick James and Malcolm Lockyer's Orchestra. An early TV date was Gerald's 'Show Case' on Monday 15th January 1951. A year later they could be seen regularly on Cyril Stapleton's monthly television series 'Hit Parade', which also featured Eve Boswell, Carole Carr, Dick James and Lee Lawrence.

In August 1952 The Stargazers made their variety debut with a week at Chatham Empire followed by weeks at Shepherd's Bush and Wood Green Empires. Most years they would do a short tour around London's music halls and on the 1953 summer season their closing number always brought the house down. Instead of singing they reverted to their original musical roles with Cliff Adams on trombone (also piano) Ronnie Milne and Bob Brown on trumpets, Freddy Datchler on clarinet with Marie Benson (just back from having a baby - Jean Campbell deputized while she was away) playing ukulele. The curtain always came down to thunderous applause. Reviews said that in an already excellent act this was the cream on top, with the whole team praised for superb stage-craft and a special mention for Marie's sense of fun.

By now established on the Decca record label, recording popular numbers like 'Me and my imagination', 'Red silken stockings', 'A-round the corner' and 'Sugarbush', they became the first Britons to have a No.1 hit. Since the U.K's first Top Ten (Twelve actually) record sales chart had been introduced by the New Musical Express in November 1952, it had been topped each week by an American. Al Martino's 'Here in my heart' was the first, followed by Jo Stafford, Kay Starr, Eddie Fisher, Perry Como and Guy Mitchell. But on 10th April 1953 for just one week The Stargazers, singing 'Broken wings', made chart history as Britain's first No.1 Top of the Pops. An American song, it didn't register in its homeland despite a fine version by Art & Dottie Todd. Dickie Valentine also had a go at it, with all three making the chart over here. A year later The Stargazers were at No.1 again (staying five

weeks this time) with another American song, the fun number 'I see the moon' that had Marie Benson playing the little girl who wants to join in. The Stargazers excelled in comedy routines and put several on disc including 'Close the door' and 'Who is it?'.

Coming third in the vocal group section of the Melody Maker's 1949 reader's poll, by 1952 they had reached the top, a position they dominated for most of the fifties.

In September 1953 group member Ronnie Milne, who had been in the Welsh Guards Band between 1939 and 1949, emigrated to Canada where he joined the Canadian Army as a musician. His place was taken by Dave Carey who wrote many of The Stargazers comedy numbers.

Over the next couple of years they had more chart success with 'The happy wanderer' just sneaking in at No.12 in April 1954 and 'Somebody' doing the same at No.20 (the charts was extended to include the Top Twenty in October 1954) in March 1955. Their 'Crazy Otto rag' made No.18 in June 1955, 'Close the door' No.6 in October 1955 and 'Twenty tiny fingers' No.4 in January 1956. The Stargazers' last chart appearance was in June 1956, well down at No.28 with 'Hot diggity'.

They continued to turn up regularly on radio and television and had their own Friday evening Radio Luxembourg series 'The Stargazers Music Shop'. The show transferred to BBC radio in March 1957, with backing from organist Harold Smart and his Rhythm Shop-Walkers. They could also be heard on Luxembourg's 'Songs for the Millions' sponsored by Empire Pools and 'Woodbine Quiz Time' with quiz-master Gerry Wilmot. Stage appearances were still few, one notable outing being to a concert at Blackpool's Opera House on Easter Sunday, 18th April 1954, on a bill topped by Nat King Cole.

Leaving in September 1955 to concentrate on her solo career, Marie Benson was replaced by fellow Australian Eula Parker who back home had been a member of the family act The Parker Sisters. Eula lasted a year before she also left to pursue a solo role and June Marlow (late Eric Winstone's Orchestra) stepped into her place.

By the late fifties The Stargazers comedy and close harmony style was beginning to sound somewhat dated, swamped by the rising tide of rock and roll. They did fight back with 'Rockin' 'n' rollin'', 'She loves to rock' and 'Hot Diggity' their last chart hit in June 1956, but the writing on the wall was getting clearer and clearer. In the 1958 Melody Maker poll The Stargazers were pushed into third place, with The Polka Dots first and The Mudlarks second.

In May 1958 original member Fred Datchler left to join the progressive Polka Dots. George Mitchell singer Nigel Brooks took his place. Still they were far from finished and in November 1958 proved the point with a most successful appearance on the Royal Variety Show at London's Coliseum Theatre. This was their third Royal show; they had appeared at a midnight matinee charity concert in aid of the National Playing Fields Association back in December 1951, with the association's president the Duke of Edinburgh present and in 1955 they had sang with Cyril Stapleton's Orchestra on that year's annual Royal Variety Show at the Victoria Palace.

Another new string to their bow was the ever growing television commercial jingle market, of which they made many. Most likely remembered is

probably their ditty extolling the virtues of Murraymints. By 1959 they had made 18 different versions, with the number being so popular they closed their Palladium act with it. They even put a version on disc, titled 'Sorry, you'll have to wait'.

The Stargazers last Decca disc was a Ray Conniff styled version of the popular oldie 'My blue heaven' that went down well on their TV show 'Nightcap' and Saturday evening radio series 'Saturday Music Album', a two hour fast moving show that they shared with singers Janet Waters, Andy Cole and Mike Shaun supported by Eric Jupp and his Orchestra and the Bernie Fenton Quartet. At the end of 1959 June Marlow left to be replaced by Barbara Moore, one of Granada TV's Granadiers (a Cliff Adams group). Dave Carey followed during 1960 and I don't think the group continued far into the new decade. By then Cliff Adams was already busy with his simple songs for song lovers and 'Sing Something Simple' was still going strong several decades later.

The Stargazers only album of original songs was 'South of the Border' (Decca LK 4309) that was criticised by 'Record Mirror' for trying to present Latin American music in a rock and roll style.

During the seventies Paul Fenoulhet recorded an album of golden radio themes that featured several tracks by The Stargazers directed by Cliff Adams (but I doubt if these were the original group - although they certainly sound very good).

#### The Stargazers Recordings

PARLOPHONE (with Billy Thorburn's Organ Dance Band & Me)

F 2403 Apl 50 'Mama knows best / Why is it'  
F 2412 May 50 'French can can polka / Bamboo'  
F 2417 Jly 50 'Hey neighbour / The comb and paper polka'  
F 2420 Aug 50 'A load of hay / Brumas Brumas Brumas'  
F 2425 Oct 50 'Ashes of roses / Down by the old Zuyder Zee'  
F 2431 Nov 50 'Goodnight Irene /  
The red we want is the red  
we've got'  
F 2442 Jan 51 'Good luck, good health, God bless you /  
Sunshine  
mountain'

ESQUIRE (An Australian label recorded in UK by Polygon)  
(all with Petula Clark)

E 1011 50 'Out of a clear blue sky / You go to my head'  
E 1012 50 'Music, music, music / Blossoms on the bough'  
E 1024 50 'Silver dollar / Talky talky'

POLYGON (with Petula Clark)

P 1002 Dec 50 'You are my true love / You're the sweetest in  
the land' (acc by Harold Smart  
quintet)

COLUMBIA

DB 2724 Sep 50 (with Steve Conway) 'Sentimental me / In  
a  
boat on a lake with my darling' (acc  
by

Jackie Brown

quartet)

DB 2734 Sep 50 (with Marie Benson) 'Silver dollar / Look

Paramor orch)  
DB 2749 Oct 50 (with Steve Conway) 'Mona Liza / Ashes  
of

roses' (acc by Jackie

Brown orch)  
DB 2821 Mar 51 (with Norrie Paramor's Dixielanders)

ma-tazz' 'A razz-a-

LONDON

L 1028 Apl 51 (with Josh White) 'On top of old smokey'  
(acc by Billy

Hill orch)  
DECCA

F 9207 Sep 49 (with Issy Bonn) 'I'm gonna let you cry for  
a  
change / Twenty four hours of  
sunshine'

(acc by Bruce

Campbell orch)  
F 9275 Nov 49 (with Dick James) 'Say goodnight but not  
goodbye' (acc by

Mantovani orch)  
F 9344 Feb 50 (with Dick James) 'Mamma knows best  
(acc by Stanley

Black orch)  
F 9406 May 50 'Cry of the wild goose / Telephone  
song'  
(acc by Tito Burns

Quintet)  
F 9424 Jun 50 (with Dick James) 'Let's do it again /  
Somewhere at the end of the  
rainbow' (acc by

Malcolm Lockyer's

Barnstormers)  
F 9481 Sep 50 (with Dick James) 'Rosy apples / Night  
after  
night' (acc by Cyril

Stapleton orch)  
F 9486 Oct 50 'What brings good cheer / The comb and  
paper  
polka' (acc by Carl Schmidt & his

Bartenders)  
F 9492 Nov 50 (with Alan Dean) 'The yodelling ghost'  
(with  
John Macauley - yodelling, acc by Nat

Temple

orch)  
F 9535 Nov 50 'Me and my imagination / The trouble  
with  
love

is love'  
F 9577 Dec 50 (with Benny Lee) 'Ferry Boat Inn / I taut I  
taw a  
puddy tat' (acc by Nat

Temple orch)  
F 9578 Dec 50 'Red silken stockings (acc by Tito Burns  
Sextet)  
/ Oh babe' (acc by Stanley

Black orch)  
F 9579 Dec 50 'Red apple cheeks and blueberry eyes /  
One,  
two, drink up' (acc by Stanley Black

Blacksmiths)  
F 9633 Mar 51 (with Dick James) 'If I didn't miss you /  
Alma Llanerna' (acc by Stanley

Black orch)  
F 9635 Mar 51 (with Benny Lee) 'Irene / I ain't gonna  
greive'  
(Nat

Temple orch)  
F 9636 Mar 51 (with Dick James) 'Mary Rose / Eleanor'  
(acc by Stanley

Black orch)  
F 9637 Apl 51 'Lonely dreams, lonely lips, lonely heart /  
(with Benny Lee) Whistling postman'  
(acc by

<i>Black orch)</i> F 9643    Apl 51	<i>Stanley</i> 'Fly away Peter, fly away Paul / To think you've chosen me' ( <i>acc by S.B</i>	F 9907    May 52	<i>(with Primo Scala band)</i> 'You wish me to get you'
<i>orch)</i> F 9654    Apl 51	<i>(with Dick James)</i> 'Our wedding song / At the close of a long, long day' ( <i>acc by</i>	F 9913    Jun 52	<i>(with Primo Scala band)</i> 'Lingering down t he lane'
<i>S.B. orch)</i> F 9679    May 51	<i>(with Benny Lee)</i> 'Wimmin' / Rose Rose I love you' ( <i>acc by Nat</i>	F 9960    Aug 52	'The day of Jubilo / Sugarbush' ( <i>acc by</i> <i>Nat</i>
<i>Temple orch)</i> F 9688    Jun 51	"    "    'Fifty years ago / Kilkenny Castle' ( <i>acc by Nat</i>	<i>Temple orch)</i> F 9987    Oct 52	<i>(with Jean Campbell)</i> 'Bonnie bonnie Charlie / The pride of Donaghadee' ( <i>acc by</i>
<i>Temple orch)</i> F 9694    Jun 51	<i>(with Dennis Lotis &amp; Ted Heath Music)</i> The King's horses'	<i>Primo Scala</i> <i>n band)</i> F 10023 Dec 52	<i>(with Ray Ellington)</i> 'Feet up / Bruce the spider' <i>(acc by Johnny</i>
F 9701    Jly 51	<i>(with Dick James)</i> My truly truly fair / Happy valley' ( <i>acc by Stanley</i>	<i>Douglas orch)</i> F 10025 Dec 52	'Any old time / My pretty one' <i>(acc by The</i>
<i>Black orch)</i> F 9718    Jly 51	<i>(with Benny Lee)</i> 'Around the world / If dreams were only pennies' ( <i>acc by Nat</i>	<i>Claviolines)</i> F 10047 Feb 53	'Make it soon / Broken wings' ( <i>inst acc)</i> F 10050 Feb 53
<i>Temple orch)</i> F 9719    Jly 51	<i>(with Benny Lee)</i> 'Not for all the dreams in dreamland / Pianna Anna' ( <i>acc by</i>	<i>(with Lee Lawrence)</i> 'The good book says' <i>(acc by Ted</i>	<i>Heath Music)</i> F 10056 Apl 53
<i>N.T. orch)</i> F 9766    Nov 51	<i>(with Les Howard)</i> 'Beside you' ( <i>acc N.T.</i> <i>orch)</i> F 9770    Oct 51	<i>Temple orch)</i> F 10114 Jun 55	'A whistling kettle and a dancing cat / Tell me you're mine' ( <i>acc by Nat</i>
F 9777    Oct 51	'The kissin' bug boogie / If you turn me down' <i>(with instrumental</i>	<i>(with Carroll Levis)</i> 'Funny little bunny / <i>(&amp; Mickey Maguire)</i> Tell me a story' <i>(acc by</i>	<i>Roland</i>
<i>accompaniment)</i> F 9775    Nov 51	<i>(with Les Howard)</i> 'Blue smoke' ( <i>acc N.T.</i> <i>orch)</i> F 9777    Oct 51	<i>Shaw orch)</i> F 10132 Jly 53	<i>(with Jimmy Young)</i> 'Say you're mine again' <i>(acc by Ron</i>
<i>Stapleton orch)</i> F 9783    Oct 51	<i>(with Felix King Orch)</i> Hangin' around with you'	<i>Goodwin orch)</i> F 10133 Jly 53	'Celebration rag / I love, love, love it' <i>(inst acc)</i> F 10138 Jly 53
F 9799    Dec 51	<i>(with Primo Scala Band)</i> 'Gathering of the Clans / A Gordon for me'	<i>(with Dinah Kaye)</i> 'Just another polka' ( <i>acc</i> <i>by</i> <i>Johnny</i>	<i>Douglas orch)</i> F 10153 Aug 53
F 9800    Dec 51	'The flying Dutchman / I want to be near you' <i>(acc by Stanley</i>	<i>(with Dennis Lotis)</i> 'Look at that girl / Let's walk that-a-way' ( <i>acc by Nat</i>	<i>Temple orch)</i> F 10155 Aug 53
<i>Black orch)</i> F 9807    Dec 51	<i>(with Primo Scala Band)</i> 'Where the sweetheart roses grow / Standing beneath the clock'	<i>(with Benny Lee)</i> 'Oh / My lucky number' <i>(acc by Nat</i>	<i>Temple orch)</i> F 10170 Oct 53
F 9836    Feb 52	'Greensleaves / Rollin' stone' ( <i>acc by</i> <i>Nat</i>	<i>Douglas orch)</i> F 10197 Nov 53	'Vaya con dios / You, you, you' ( <i>acc by</i> <i>Johnny</i>
<i>Temple orch)</i> F 9837    Feb 52	'I never was loved by anyone else / The lie-de-lie song' ( <i>acc by</i>	<i>(with Dennis Lotis)</i> 'Take a little walk around the block / I was in the mood' ( <i>acc by</i> <i>Reg</i>	<i>Owen orch)</i> F 10212 Nov 53
<i>N.T. orch)</i> F 9875    Apl 52	<i>(with Les Howard)</i> 'Saturday rag' ( <i>acc by</i> <i>Frank</i>	<i>(with Benny Lee)</i> 'I'll try / Record hop' <i>(acc by The</i>	<i>Brass Hats)</i> F 10213 Nov 53
<i>Chacksfield orch)</i> F 9888    May 52	<i>(with Les Howard)</i> 'I wanna love you' <i>(acc by</i> <i>Frank</i>	<i>I see the moon / Eh cumpari' (acc by</i> <i>Syd Dean</i>	<i>band)</i> F 10223 Dec 53
<i>Chacksfield orch)</i> F 9897    May 52	'To think you've chosen me ( <i>acc by</i> <i>Stanley</i> <i>Black orch)</i> / It's a long way from your house to my house ( <i>acc by Primo Scala</i>	<i>S.D. band)</i> F 10240 Feb 54	'It's Christmas all over the world / The little fir tree' ( <i>acc by</i>
<i>accordion band)</i> F 9905    May 52	<i>(with Primo Scala Band)</i> 'A-round the corner / Dance me loose'	<i>(with Lita Roza)</i> 'Just a dream or two ago' <i>(acc by Johnny Douglas</i>	<i>orch)</i> F 10259 Feb 54
		<i>The happy wanderer / Till we two are</i> <i>one'</i> <i>(acc by Syd Dean</i>	<i>band)</i> F 10268 Mar 54
		<i>(with Dennis Lotis)</i> 'The cuff of my shirt' <i>(acc by Reg Owen</i>	<i>orch)</i>

F 10281 Mar54	(with Jimmy Young)	'One moment more / Melancholy me' (acc by Roland Shaw orch)
F 10310 May wholesome	54	'The man with the banjo / Good beer' (acc by Cyril Stapleton orch)
F 10345 Jly little	54	(with George Elrick) 'When you spread a happiness / Breakfast on Sunday morning' (acc by Cliff Adams orch)
F 10349 Jly sweetheart	54	(with Ted Heath Music) 'Goodnight / (& Dennis Lotis) Hit and run affair'
F 10379 Sep 54		'I need you now / 365 kisses' (acc by Cyril Stapleton orch)
F 10394 Oct 54 suspicion'	54	(with Dickie Valentine) 'The finger of (acc by Johnny Douglas orch)
F 10412 Nov54 morning'	54	'Rose of the wildwood / Came the (acc by Will Glahe and his Music)
F 10437 Jan 55 'Somebody /	55	(with Sonny Farrar Banjo Band) N
F 10523 May (inst acc)	55	'The crazy Otto rag / Hey Mr. Banjo'
F 10529 May	55	(with Roy Smith) 'Red roses / The devil's in your eyes'
F 10569 Jly 55		(With Sonny Farrar Banjo Band) 'At the steamboat river ball / I love you a mountain'
F 10594 Aug 55 /	55	'Close the door (acc by Johnny Gray band) / I've got four big brothers (inst acc)
F 10626 Oct 55	55	'Twenty tiny fingers / An old beer bottle' (acc by Syd Dean band)
F 10668 Dec 55	55	'The tender trap / When the swallows say goodbye' (acc by Johnny Gray band)
F 10696 Feb goodbye'	56	'Zambezi / When the swallows say (acc by Johnny Gray band)
F 10731 May by	56	'Hot diggity / Rockin' and rollin' (acc by Johnnie Gray band)
F 10775 Aug 56 loves to	56	'John Jacob Jingleheimer Smith / She rock' (acc by Johnny Gray band)
F 10867 Mar57	57	'You won't be around / Mangos' (acc by Glen Somers orch)
F 10898 May	57	'Honky tonk song / Golly'
F 10916 Jly 57 (acc by	57	'Who is it? / Sorry, you'll have to wait' Malcolm Lockyer orch)
F 10969 Dec 57 (rhythm acc)	57	'The skiffing dogs / Out of this world'
F 11034 Jun 58	58	'Big man / Lonely for a letter'
F 11105 Jan 59	59	'My blue heaven / How ja lika'

## BELTONA

BE 2594 Oct 53 (with Highland Accordion Band) 'White  
heather

Rothsay Bay'  
BE 2616 54 (*with Benny Lee*) 'Marching through the  
heather

Sandy's tune'  
PALETTE

PG 9003 Sep 60 'Three beautiful words / Manhattan  
spiritual'

**Tommy STEELE**

Credited as being Britain's first rock and roll star, Tommy, from Bermondsey, South London, certainly leapt to fame with his first recording, his own composition 'Rock with the caveman'.

Born Tommy Hicks on 17th December 1936 the son of a bookmaker, during the early fifties he was a merchant seaman, serving as a steward on the transatlantic Cunard liner 'Queen of Bermuda'. Having taught himself to play guitar while recovering from a serious illness he was sometimes included in the cabaret provided for the passengers. With his mop of blonde hair, infectious grin and genuine cockney charm Tommy was an instant success.

While on shore leave back in London he would often join the other aspiring rock and rollers playing and singing at the Two I's coffee bar in Soho's Old Compton Street. It was here that John Kennedy, photographer for 'Record Mirror', heard him and saw the opportunity to expand his small photo agency into pop star management.

Kennedy told Tommy he could be big and offered to manage him, but Tommy had heard it all before and still was nowhere. Rock and roll at the time had a fairly bad name so Kennedy decided to take it up market and joining forces with Larry Parnes got Tommy booked into a charity 'Celebrity Night' at the Cote d'Azur Club in the West End. He turned out to be a 'deb's delight', the ritzy customers just loved him and with Kennedy and Parnes PR efforts working overtime he got his picture and story in the morning papers. Tommy's next booking was another up-market venue, a season at the classy Stork Room.

This was September 1956 and before the month was out so was his first Decca single, 'Rock with the caveman' backed with 'Rock around the town', both compositions written with friends from the Two I's Mike Pratt and Lionel Bart. Labelled as Tommy Steele and the Steelmen, the solid rock backing had come from a group of experienced studio musicians.

On 15th October he was performing the songs on Jack Payne's BBC TV 'Off the Record' show and the response brought in over 1,000 fan letters. The media called him "Britain's answer to Elvis Presley" and practically overnight he had become a 'star'. On Sunday the 4th of November he was on ITV's 'Jack Jackson Show' and was back on 'Off the Record' Christmas Eve.

During October he was filming in the Pat O'Brien, Louis Maxwell murder melodrama 'Kill Me Tomorrow', in which he had a small part and sang 'Rebel rock'. This came out on disc when the film was released the following year. By now 'Rock with the caveman' had reached No.13 on the charts but his second single, two more rockers 'Doomsday rock' and 'Elevator rock', failed to register.

The Harold Fielding agency signed Tommy and his backing group The Steelmen (Alan Stuart tenor sax, Dennis Price piano, Alan Weighell bass, Leo



Pollini drums), putting them into a top of the bill spot at Sunderland Empire opening Monday 5th November 1956. Support came from comedians Mike & Bernie Winters, Bill Maynard and pianist Thunderclap Jones. The variety tour played weeks at Nottingham, Sheffield, Brighton and, from the week commencing 3rd December, Tommy made his London theatre debut at Finsbury Park Empire on a bill including Robert Earl, Janie Marden, The Three Deuces and Mike & Bernie Winters.

Already attempting to shed his Rock and Roll label and appeal to a wider audience Tommy recorded with Ted Heath and on 21st January 1957 was again aiming high when he opened in cabaret at the exclusive Cafe de Paris for two weeks. He was paid £400 a week, a lot of money in those days.

In February a Tommy Steele series began on BBC TV and he could also be seen regularly on pop music shows like the 'Jack Jackson Show', 'Six Five Special' and the 'Festival of Dance Music' from the Royal Albert Hall. While still touring in variety, the month of March was mainly committed to work on the autobiographical film 'The Tommy Steele Story', a pretty amazing development when you consider he'd been in the business less than a year. At least it indicates how meteoric his rise up the ladder of success had been.

A memorable film it wasn't, but there were lots of good songs and music from Humphrey Lyttleton, Chas. McDevitt, Nancy Whisky and a couple of calypso bands as well as Tommy's contribution. With a score written by Lionel Bart, Mike Pratt and Tommy, the best songs were 'Butterfingers', 'A handful of songs', 'Cannibal pot' and 'Elevator rock'. They were all available on a Decca LP (LF 1288).

Another Decca LP (LF 1287) was 'The Tommy Steele Stage Show' recorded in London on his 20th birthday and issued in April 1957. His top selling singles were certainly generating a nice income for Decca, a company that had not previously shown much interest in rock and roll music.

When Guy Mitchell's Stateside number one hit 'Singing the blues' invaded our shores in December 1956 it had to compete with Tommy's homegrown version. As it turned out there was no winner, with both of them claiming the top spot for one week each in January. A month later they were doing battle again with 'Knee deep in the blues' and this time Guy was clearly in front reaching No.3 while Tommy trailed behind at No.15.

By July Tommy was back in the Top Ten with 'Butterfingers' a number that spent a total of eighteen weeks on the charts. Now on a roll, his next disc 'Shiralee', was written and recorded for the sound-track of the film of the same name that starred Peter Finch as an Australian 'swagman'. It made No.11 in September. At the same time the double sided hit of 'Water water' and 'A handful of songs' was hovering around the number five position. Tommy's final chart entry of the year was a one week appearance of 'Hey you!' way down at No.28 in November. Tommy later received an Ivor Novello award from the Songwriters Guild of Great Britain for 'A handful of songs', judged the most outstanding song of 1957.

In May 1957 Tommy and his Steelmen were on tour with the American group Freddy Bell and the Bellboys who were still riding high on their hit 'Giddy-up-a-ding-dong'. His first American release on the London label, 'Butterfingers' backed with 'Teenage party', was currently getting favourable

reviews over there. During August he was on stage every afternoon at Blackpool's Palace Theatre, while appearing evenings at Morecambe and Southport with Mike & Bernie Winters.

Now in the big-time, Tommy splashed out some of his new-found wealth on a new house for his parents in Catford, south-east London. A big house-warming party was held on Sunday 31st August in a large marquee in the garden. Attended by over a hundred friends, old and new, including many show business personalities, the last guest to arrive at 1.30am Monday morning, was Terry Dene who had flown over from the Isle of Wight having done a concert there on Sunday night.

By the latter half of 1957 Tommy's change in style was just about complete with rock numbers almost absent from his stage act. Also gone, on ITV's 'Sunday Night at Blackpool' on 18th August, were the shirt and jeans, replaced by a smart tuxedo.

He did return to the more familiar apparel for his second big movie 'The Duke Wore Jeans', that began filming in October. Co-starring June Laverick, Tommy plays two parts in this watchable film, the Hon. Tony Whitecliffe and Tommy his cockney double. There were also some good songs including 'Happy guitar' that charted at No.20, and 'Princess'.

Tommy's other 1958 recordings to make the hit parade were 'Nairobi' that went to No.3 during its eleven weeks on the chart, 'The only man on the island' and 'Come on let's go'. 1959 successes were 'Tallahassee lassie', 'Give! give! give!' and from his new film 'Tommy the Toreador' the Ivor Novello award nominated novelty number 'Little white bull', that reached No.6 during its seventeen weeks on the chart.

November 1957 was a right Royal month for Tommy, on the 4th he was chosen as one of the stars to be presented to the Queen at Leicester Square Odeon. The occasion being the Royal Film Premiere showing of the Gene Kelly, Mitzi Gaynor musical comedy 'Les Girls'. Two weeks later on the 18th he was on stage with his Steelmen at the London Palladium playing 'skiffle' on the Royal Command Variety Performance.

Tommy rounded the year off playing in his first pantomime 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' at Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre with Rikki Fulton. Already establishing himself as an all round family attraction (much of his fan mail was now coming from adults) his role in 'Goldilocks' continued to strengthen this aim. Playing a wandering player who joins a travelling circus, he sang several ballads, danced and joined in the custard pie fun in a great three hour show.

Two end of year television appearances are worth a mention, a live edition of 'Six Five Special' from the Two I's coffee bar on Saturday 16th November and ITV's big 'Christmas Eve Show' with Anne Shelton, Petula Clark, Dickie Valentine, Frankie Vaughan, Michael Holliday, Humphrey Lyttleton's Band and Ted Heath and his Music (some line up!). On 5th January he was on 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium' doing numbers from his panto.

Unlike many rising stars Tommy had so far resisted the chance of promoting his recordings on American TV because of union rules preventing the Steelmen from taking part.

When the Liverpool pantomime ended in February, the opportunity of topping the bill in variety at the London Palladium was turned down by

Tommy's managers as the £2,000 a week fee wasn't considered to be enough. John Kennedy and Larry Parnes were also at pains to defend their 30% cut of his earnings (most managers took 10%) as being reasonable because eight people worked full time on his career.

So instead, on Thursday 27th February 1958, coinciding with the release of his single 'Nairobi', Tommy and the band set sail on the liner 'Winchester Castle' bound for South Africa. With a planned tour of concerts reported to be worth £4,000 a week, the Johannesburg daily newspaper Die Vaterland called for the tour to be banned because of possible teenage rioting. It did add that it had nothing against Tommy personally. As it was, most concerts went ahead, although one in Pretoria was cancelled by the city council as "prejudicial to public morals".

While back in Britain the papers were full of lots of favourable prose and pictures, on the release of his film 'The Duke Wore Jeans'. On Good Friday, the 4th April, Tommy became the first pop singer to have his likeness displayed in wax at London's Madame Tussaud's. At the time he was still in South Africa, only arriving home to meet his wax double a week later.

Just a short break, then Tommy set off on a fourteen week tour of Britain and Scandinavia starting at Caird Hall, Dundee on 30th April. Or at least that was the plan, but he was so battered and bruised by excited fans at Dundee he had to take a few days off.

On Sunday 11th May 1958 Tommy began a series of broadcasts in a disc jockey role. Called 'A Handful of Discs' he played not only Rock & Roll but also recordings by Ted Heath, Louis Armstrong, Nellie Lutcher, The Hi-Lo's etc. There was some criticism that while the R & R records were played in full, many of the others were cut off part through. He hadn't been on TV for over four months and his managers stated he may not appear again that year. They had decided too much TV exposure was not a good thing.

Continuing with his variety tour, it was soon evident that he was overdoing it and heading for a complete breakdown. Doctors ordered him to take a long rest, so he cancelled all appearances until the end of June. Don Lang took over his DJ series. While convalescing Tommy gave himself the best pick-me-up of all, announcing his engagement to showgirl Ann Donaghue on the 12th June.

On 22nd June he was back presenting 'A Handful of Songs' and, despite previous predictions, on 28th June was on ITV in a 'Saturday Spectacular' devoted entirely to Tommy Steele. And on Monday 27th October BBC TV grabbed him for 'This is Your Life' (he was still only 21). On the show Eamonn Andrews introduced friends and fellow artists including Jack Champion who taught Tommy to play guitar, Chas. McDevitt whose group he had sat in with at the Two I's, and Mike Pratt, one of the original members of his early Cavemen group.

Back in variety he was on tour with trumpet ace Kenny Baker, The Kentones and the Betty Smith Group till September, when he took a well earned holiday in the South of France followed by one-night-stands until Christmas. That was except for a couple of days in November when he was recovering from crashing his car (he drove a powerful AC Aceca) into a tree.

Opening in the panto 'Cinderella' at the London Coliseum on 18th December 1958, Tommy was

playing Buttons to singer Yana's Cinderella with Jimmy Edwards as the King and Kenneth Williams and Ted Durante as the Ugly Sisters. Also in the cast were Betty Marsden, Bruce Trent and, as well as the human members, two ponies, a large dog, a horse and a flock of geese.

During the panto's sixteen week run two romantic ballads 'A lovely night' and 'Marriage type love', from the score by Rogers & Hammerstein, were issued as a Decca single. With no guitar strumming and no rock songs, he was accused by some fans of deserting them. In fact the audiences were seeing the Tommy Steele, already confident singing, dancing and cracking jokes, in the musical comedy role that he would make his own through the decades to come. His 1959 cover versions of Freddie Cannon's 'Talahassee lassie' and Ritchie Valens' 'Come on let's go' were just about his last R & R numbers on disc.

Unfortunately an ankle injury forced Tommy to miss the last week of 'Cinderella', although it did give his understudy, 25 year old Ted Rogers (a name we've heard a lot more of since), a chance to shine.

Much of the early months of 1959 were taken up filming 'Tommy the Toreador' with co-stars Janet Munro and Sid James. Again playing a seaman he becomes involved in smuggling, saves the life of a bull-fighter, who later saves Tommy from a ferocious bull. All good stuff (but would bull-fighting be considered a suitable subject for a film in these politically correct days? - I think not!), the film had several good songs with all royalties from the big one, 'Little white bull', being donated to the Variety Club's Children's Cancer Fund. Despite missing out on royalties from the song Tommy did get a consolation prize when he was presented with a 'Silver Disc' for sales of 250,000. The premiere at Warner's Leicester Square Theatre on 3rd December 1959 was a very Spanish affair with lots of flamenco dancing girls. Ten days later a special mini-premiere was held at the Regal Cinema in London's Old Kent Road in aid of Bermondsey Youth Club (Tommy's old club).

During August Tommy spent about a week in Russia with Carole Lesley, Peter Arne and Richard Todd, representing British youth at the Moscow Film Festival. Almost his first TV appearance of the year (he'd been on 'The 1959 Show' a 60 minute ITV music and variety extravaganza on New Year's Day) was another ITV 'Spectacular' on Saturday 19th September, the first of four he made that autumn. Except for his records you were unlikely to hear Tommy on BBC radio but on Radio Luxembourg there was the regular Wednesday evening series 'Meet Tommy Steele'.

There was no pantomime for Tommy that year, he was too busy working on his next film 'Light Up The Sky'. A comedy this time it also starred Benny Hill and Ian Carmichael and was all about a group of soldiers serving at a searchlight battery 'somewhere on the south coast' during 1942. Tommy and Benny play brothers with Ian the unit commander, and there was just one song, the title number.

Late February 1960 a large enthusiastic crowd of fans was on hand to welcome Tommy when he arrived in Melbourne at the start of his first Australian tour. "The sort of welcome usually only given to top American stars" said one report. And not only was the welcome agreeable, so was the financial inducement, reported to be £100,000 for

the two month tour. This was the highest fee so far paid by the Australian Tivoli circuit in its 48 year history. While considering them paying such a large sum of money, as it certainly was in 1960, one has to consider the size of the Melbourne and Sydney Tivoli theatres. They were huge places easily capable of generating income of over £25,000 a week. Support on the show came from the totally laid-back comedian Joe Church (who, my Roy Hudd book tells me, still holds the record for the most number of appearances at the London Palladium), The Starr Sisters and an 18 piece orchestra led by Harry Robinson (of Lord Rockingham fame).

Now into the 1960's, Tommy's output of single recordings began to slow down. First to arrive in that decade was no doubt inspired by Lonnie Donegan's current hit 'My old man's a dustman'. Off one of Tommy's recent LP's it was an up-dated version of Harry Champion's 1906 showstopper 'What a mouth (what a north and south)'. This was backed by 'Kookaburra' which sounds like something he must have brought back from his Australian trip.

Back in London it wasn't long before Ann and Tommy had set the date and they married on Saturday 18th June 1960. A colour film of the event was shown in cinemas around the country by Pathe News. The only real choice of destination for a honeymoon was Blackpool, because that's where Tommy was about to open in his first big summer season show, at the Opera House with Alma Cogan, Eddie Calvert and Sid Millward's Nitwits.

Further extending his move away from rock and to some extent even 'pop' music, on Tuesday 8th November 1960 Tommy opened, playing Tony Lumpkin, in the Old Vic production of Oliver Goldsmith's 18th century comedy 'She Stoops To Conquer'. Playing opposite Peggy Mount, the play was reviewed as being a 'smash hit'. He would play another straight role in 1969, at The Queens Theatre in 'The Servant Of Two Masters'.

Not giving up variety and musical comedy altogether though, 1961 found him mainly touring in variety and one-night-stands, plus a summer season at Great Yarmouth's Windmill Theatre with Frankie Howerd. On 11th June he topped the bill on 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium' (the first time in four years) and was back on again two weeks later.

Of his only two singles that year one was songs from the shows, 'The dit-dit song' by Monty Norman and Woolf Mankowitz came from their musical 'Belle' and the reverse 'My big best shoes' was from Sandy Wilson's 'Valmouth'.

Tommy played Arthur Kipps in the 1963 musical production 'Half a Sixpence' (based on H. G. Wells novel 'Kipps') at London's Cambridge Theatre for 18 months and then repeated his success on Broadway, before taking up the role again for the 1967 film. Songs from the show appeared on a Decca single and album. Other movies were 'It's All Happening' with Marion Ryan and a host of pop stars in 1963, 'Finian's Rainbow' with Petula Clark and Fred Astaire in 1968 and 'Where's Jack?' a year later.

Tommy appeared in the London Palladium's 1969 pantomime 'Dick Whittington' with Mary Hopkin, Billy Dainty and Kenneth Connor. He was back at the Palladium in 1974 starring in the musical 'Hans Andersen'. With music and lyrics by Frank Loesser he recorded two of the songs for a Pye single. The show was revived in 1977. In June 1983, again at the Palladium, Tommy directed and starred in the stage version of M.G.M's 'Singing in the Rain'.

In 1979 the Variety Club of Great Britain voted Tommy Entertainer of the Year and the country awarded him an OBE. In his spare time during the eighties, while relaxing at his Richmond mansion (on the market for £10,000,000 in 1997), he wrote a novel 'The Final Run' and became something of a sculptor and painter, exhibiting at the Royal Academy.

In later years Tommy's appearances have been mainly restricted to his one-man spectacular 'What A Show' where, supported by a colourful chorus, he revives and relives the many songs and successes of his long career.

		Tommy Steele Recordings	
DECCA			
F 10795	Oct 56	'Rock with the caveman / the town'	Rock around
F 10808	Oct 56	'Elevator rock / Doomsday rock'	
F 10819	Nov 56	'Singing the blues / Rebel rock'	
F 10849	Feb 57	'Knee deep in the blues / Teenage party'	
F 10877	Apl 57	'Butterfingers / Cannibal pot'	
F 10896	May 57	'Shiralee / Grandad's rock'	
F 10915	Jly 57	<i>(on Lord Taverner's Hit Parade Record No.2)</i>	
		tterfly'	'Bu
F 10923	Aug 57	'Water water / A handful of songs'	
F 10941	Oct 57	'Hey you! / Plant a kiss'	
F 10976	Apl 58	'Happy guitar / Princess'	
F 10991	Mar 58	'Nairobi / Neon sign'	
F 11026	May 58	'It's all happening / What do you do'	
F 11041	Jun 58	'The only man on the island / I puts the lightie on'	
F 11072	Oct 58	'Put a ring on her finger / Come on, let's go'	
F 11089	Nov 58	'A lovely night / Marriage type love'	
F 11117	Mar 59	'The trial / Hiawatha'	
F 11152	Jly 59	'Tallahassee lassie / Give! give! give!'	
F 11162	Sep 59	'You were mine / Young ideas'	
F 11177	Nov 59	'Little white bull / Singing time'	
F 11245	Jun 60	'What a mouth / Kookaburra'	
F 11275	Sep 60	'Happy-go-lucky blues / (The girl with the)	Long
		black hair'	
F 11299	Nov 60	'Must be Santa / Boys and girls'	
F 11361	May 61	'The dit-dit song / My big best shoes'	
F 11372	Jly 61	'The writing on the wall / Drunken guitar'	
F 11479	Jun 62	'What a little darlin' / Hit record'	
F 11532	Jan 63	'Butter wouldn't melt in your mouth / Where have all the	
		flowers gone'	
F 11551	Dec 62	'He's got love / Green eye'	
F 11615	Mar 63	'Flash, bang, wallop! / She's too far above me'	
COLUMBIA			
DB 7070	63	'The dream maker / Egg and chips'	
R.C.A.			
RCA 1654	68	'Half a sixpence / If the rains got to fall'	
BUENA VISTA			
DF 457	69	'Fortuosity / I'm a brass band today'	
PYE			
7N45393	Sep 74	'The King's new clothes /	Wonderful
Copenhagen'			
DECCA		(re-issues)	

F 13813 Oct 78 'Rock with the caveman / Elevator rock'  
 F 13814 Oct 78 'Singing the blues / Knee deep in the blues'  
 F 13855 Aug 79 'Give! give! give! / Doomsday rock'

#### SAFARI

SAFE 61 84 'Singing in the rain / You are my lucky star'

## Ann STEPHENS

I am not sure that the recordings of young Ann Stephens really come within the boundaries of 'popular music' but during the 1940's and 50's they were certainly popular and I doubt if there are any readers, as children, who had not heard her telling the stories of Christopher Robin or Alice in Wonderland, on programmes like 'Children's Choice'. Ann, born in London on 21st May 1931, was chosen at the age of 10 from 700 applicants by the H.M.V. Record Company to make a series of charity recordings in aid of the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. Her 'middle class' accent and clear diction, while retaining a perfectly natural manner, were the obvious assets that persuaded the judges to pick Ann. They also noted her charming manners and radiant smile. Having taken dancing lessons since she was three and musical tuition since she was four her parents certainly had their sights set on stardom for at least one of their daughters. Her first three discs, 12 inch 78's out in October 1941, were scenes and songs from Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Through the Looking Glass'. With Ann in the title role, and a music score by Walter Slaughter, they also feature the voices of Arthur Askey as the Mad Hatter, Florence Desmond as the Duchess and the Cheshire Cat, plus Robertson Hare, Stanley Holloway, Ronald Frankau and others. Aimed at the Christmas market they were available singly, or as a set in a "Handsome Illustrated Portfolio" for 15/10½d (*about 80p*).

Just a month later Ann was back at H.M.V.'s Abbey Road studio recording the first (10 inch this time) of eight 'Ann's Nursery Rhyme' discs. On this occasion she was joined by her two sisters Jill (11) and Helen (7). It was Ann's second 'Nursery Rhyme' issue that has probably become her best remembered record, coupling 'Christopher Robin' and 'Buckingham Palace' from A. A. Milne's 1924 book of verse 'When We Were Very Young'.

Before the close of 1941 Ann had secured a part in 20th Century Fox's historical film 'The Young Mr. Pitt', starring Robert Donat, Robert Morley and Phyllis Calvert. The start of a film career that over the next nine years encompassed 'In Which We Serve' with Noel Coward in 1942, 'Dear Octopus' (Michael Wilding & Margaret Lockwood - 1943), 'Fanny By Gaslight' (James Mason, Stewart Granger & Phyllis Calvert - 1944), 'They Were Sisters' (James Mason & Phyllis Calvert - 1945), 'The Upturned Glass' (James Mason & Rosamund John - 1946), 'No Room At The Inn' (Hermione Braddley & Freda Jackson - 1948), 'Your Witness' (Robert Montgomery & Leslie Banks - 1950) and 'The Franchise Affair' with Michael Dennison & Dulcie Gray also in 1950.

In the recording studio, November 1945 brought a new version of 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Through the Looking Glass' (the cast included her sister Helen as the White Rabbit, plus Robertson Hare, Tommy Handley and Tommy Trinder) and in December the last of Ann's nursery rhythm series.

She did make several more discs, the last one in November 1950 being a selection of songs, with Philip Green's orchestra and chorus, from Walt Disney's recently released feature length cartoon 'Cinderella'.

What happened to Ann during the fifties remains a mystery; she is believed to have gone to America, with one report claiming that she took her own life there sometime during the sixties.

#### Ann Stephens Recordings

H.M.V.		(C = 12 inch - BD = 10 inch)
C 3243	Oct 41	'Alice in Wonderland'
C 3244	Oct 41	'Alice in Wonderland'
C 3245	Oct 41	'Through the Looking Glass'
BD 960	Nov 41	'Ann's Nursery Rhythms (with her sisters Jill & Helen)'
BD 973	Dec 41	'Ann's Nursery Rhymes No.2: Buckingham Palace / Christopher Robin' (with Clifford Greenwood orch)
BD 1007	Jun 42	'Ann's Nursery Series No.3; selection from Disney's Silly Symphony (with vocal trio)'
BD 1025	Nov 42	'Ann's Nursery Series No.4: Christopher Robin alone in the dark / Suzette my dolly and me'
BD 1062	Dec 43	'Ann's Nursery Series No.5: The sick teddy bear / The night nursery'
BD 1090	Nov 44	'Ann's Nursery Series No.6: Teddy bears picnic / Dicky bird hop (whistler Ronald Gourlay)' (with Henry Geehl orch)
BD 1093	Dec 44	'Ann's Nursery Series No.7: Frere Jacques / Sur le pont d'Avignon'
C 3457	Nov 45	'Alice in Wonderland 2nd Series'
C 3458	Nov 45	'Through the Looking Glass 2nd Series'
BD 1113	Dec 45	'Ann's Nursery Series No.8: Walt Disney selection'
BD 1150	Nov 46	'Tell me, Hatter (from Alice in Wonderland) / Kiddies Delight selection'
BD 1178	Oct 47	'Very Young Songs'
C 3640	Nov 47	'King Wenceslas Pt 1 & 2'
C 3641	Nov 47	'King Wenceslas Pt 3 & 4'
BD 1210	Sep 48	'Bambi selection / Bumble Bee Fair selection'
BD 1228	Dec 48	'The Wizard of Oz selection'
BD 1261	Sep 49	'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs selection (with Children's Chorus)'
BD 1263	Oct 49	'Goldilocks and the Three Bears (with narration by Franklin Engelmann)'
C 3930	Nov 49	'Cinderella (with Franklin Engelmann)'
BD 1266	Nov 50	'Walt Disney's Cinderella selection' (with Philip Green orch)

(The above is a simplified version of the list printed in 'In Tune' magazine No.24, that gives full details of all the items on the records)

## Doreen STEPHENS

Fondly remembered for her many years as vocalist with Billy Cotton's Band, Doreen, who got her musical encouragement from her mother, started her professional career with Jack Hylton when she was just 15.

Golden blonde, demure Doreen Stephens was born at Stockton-on-Tees on 7th November 1922 and began singing almost before she could walk. Her father Harry was an iron-moulder in the local steelworks and her mother Hilda was a talented pianist who led a well known semi-pro dance band for almost forty years.

Doreen began singing at dances from when she was about nine, and when she left school at 14 went to work for a music shop in town. But not for long, because on the recommendation of comedian Jimmy James (also from Stockton) she was signed up by Jack Hylton who put her into his road-show 'Secrets of the BBC'. Soon Doreen had been promoted to sing with Hylton's own big stage show-band.

Still only 15 she sang with Hylton at the London Palladium and went to Blackpool with Arthur Askey in a stage version of 'Band Wagon'. In 1939 Doreen crossed over to France to entertain troops with Hylton's band in a variety package that included Gracie Fields (Doreen's cousin, pianist Bert Waller, was often Gracie's accompanist) and Maurice Chevalier. During the war years Doreen toured with Maurice Winnick's Orchestra to service camps as far afield as Palestine, Italy and the Middle East.

In 1946 she joined the ex-service band The Squadronaires, staying with them for about two years appearing in variety and dance halls, including the 1947 summer season at Butlin's Clacton Holiday Camp.

In May 1948 Doreen left the Squads to freelance and broadcast with a number of different bands, Ronnie Pleydell, Jack Coles, Felix King, George Crow and Billy Cotton amongst them. By the end of 1949 she was appearing regularly on Cotton's Sunday morning 'Wakey Wakey' radio series, although she still toured as a solo act in variety, often accompanying herself on accordion.

Come the early fifties Doreen was now appearing on the Billy Cotton Band stage shows and enjoyed two successful weeks with them at the London Palladium in September 1951. She always said that working with Bill was one of the best times of her life, it was such a happy atmosphere.

Doreen played several panto seasons including 'Dick Whittington' with Terry Scott and Jack Douglas at Brighton Grand in 1952 and 'Humpty Dumpty' with Norman Wisdom at Folkestone Gardens Theatre in 1957.

By the late fifties ill health was taking its toll on Doreen's appearances, she often had to miss broadcasts because of hospital treatment. Eventually she went back home to live with her parents in Stockton, and died there from cancer on 2nd October 1965. During the war, while she was with Maurice Winnick, Doreen married pianist-arranger William Hill-Bowen, but I believe he pre-deceased her.

Doreen's first recordings were with Jack Hylton's Band in 1939, followed by some solo sides while she was with Maurice Winnick. She recorded with The Squadronaires and a few others, but her greatest output on disc was during her years with Billy Cotton.

Doreen Stephens Recordings

H.M.V.

(with Jack Hylton Orchestra)

BD 5492 Jun 39 'Wishing'  
BD 5508 Aug 39 'Wish me luck'  
BD 5530 Dec 39 'A mother's prayer at twilight'

(solo billing - currently with Maurice Winnick)

BD 923 May 41 'The London I love / The first lullaby'  
BD 927 Jun 41 'Goodnight and God bless you / To-night'  
BD 933 Jly 41 'America, I love you / Forever and a day'  
BD 936 Aug 41 'Singing a song to my mother / I understand'

DECCA

(first four with The Squadronaires)

F 8679 Sep 46 'Any time at all'  
F 8688 Oct 46 'In love in vain'  
F 8774 Jun 47 'Among my souvenirs'  
F 8961 Sep 48 'Song of the wanderer / I don't want to meet

any more

people'

F 9007 Nov 48 (with Billy Cotton Sentimentalists)

'When the organ played

Ave Maria'

F 9010 Nov 48 (with Alan Kane) 'All by yourself in the moon

light / Te two of us' (acc by Jack

Coles Orch)

F 9053 Jan 49 (with Billy Cotton Sentimentalists) 'Suvla Bay'

F 9063 Feb 49 (with Roland Peachey Hawaiian Orch)

'Gentle evening

breeze'

(following recordings with Billy Cotton and his band)

AB = Alan Breeze - B = The Bandits

F 9399 May 50 'My thanks to you (with AB)'

F 9564 Dec 50 'I only saw him once'

F 9608 Feb 51 'Good luck, good health, God bless you'

F 9617 Mar 51 'My heart cries for you'

F 9644 Apr 51 'Da-dim da-dom da-dim da-dom'

F 9682 Jun 51 'A little French cafe / Auld Scotch

mother of

mine'

F 9687 Jun 51 'May Kway oh May Kway (with BC)'

F 9717 Jly 51 'Across the wide Missouri (with AB & B)'

F 9781 Oct 51 'I hope you have a happy birthday'

F 9795 Dec 51 'Dandelion clock (with AB)'

F 9814 Jan 52 'Shrimp boats (with AB & B)'

F 9844 Feb 52 'Turn back the hands of time (with AB)'

F 9882 Apr 52 'We won't live in a castle / Broken hearted

(both

with AB)'

F 9899 May 52 'Goodbye sweetheart (with AB & B)'

F 9923 Jun 52 'Starr of hope (with Choir) / I miss my darling

(with AB &

Choir)'

F 9947 Aug 52 'Auf wiederseh'n sweetheart (with Chorus)'

F 9965 Sep 52 'Tonight beloved'

F 10041 Jan 53 'Valley of roses'

F 10058 Mar 53 'In a golden coach'

F 10096 May 53 'I'm walking behind you'

F 10139 Jly 53 'I'm saving my old love letters'

F 10179 Oct 53 'When you hear Big Ben (with Chorus)'

F 10186 Nov 53 'Be mine'

F 10235 Feb 54 'No matter what they say (with B)'

F 10329 Jly 54 'Rollin' down the line (with AB) /

I speak to

the stars'

F 10377 Oct 54 'This ole house (with B)'

F 10421 Jan 55 'When you're home with the ones you love'

F 10524 Jun 55 'Play me hearts and flowers'

F 10682 Mar 56 'Robin Hood / Happy trails (both with AB)'

F 10857 Apr 57 'If only'

## Stereo Sound

The idea of recorded sound having more than one channel has been around for some time. The 1941 Walt Disney film 'Fantasia' was probably the first time stereophonic sound was used in the entertainment industry. For the home user stereo first became available on pre-recorded tape in 1955.

In April 1955 E.M.I. demonstrated their experimental 'Stereosonic' record playing system. A year later the Yorkshire Sugden brothers, manufacturers of the quality Connoisseur record deck, demonstrated at the British Sound Recording Association exhibition a stereo record player. Their system used the 'hill and dale' method, one channel on the wall of the groove with the other on the bottom.

It was some years before stereo records went on sale. The main problem was convincing the public that they wanted stereo and encouraging them to purchase the necessary equipment. Stereo records finally became available in the U.K in May 1958 with L.P's on the Pye label, followed in August by Decca and E.M.I.

Audio Fidelity in the States claimed to have been the first world-wide, with their stereo L.P issue of April 1958. Britain's first stereo single was the 45 rpm version of Marion Ryan's 'The world goes round and round' on Pye in September 1958.

Following the 'chicken and egg' theory manufacturers now put every effort into designing stereo reproducing equipment. At the Earls Court Radio Show held during September 1958 there were 35 different makers exhibiting stereo record players. Not one was Japanese!

Late in 1958 the popularity in America of the Lawrence Welk television show was partly attributed to its stereo sound, using the T.V. speaker for one channel and an A.M. radio station for the other. Early stereo broadcasts in Britain used a similar system.

## Kirk STEVENS

A Scot with a fine no-gimmick voice, sometimes favourably compared with David Whitfield, Kirk had a brief period of success during the 1950's before being pushed aside by the noisy world of rock and roll.

Seeking his fortune he came to London during the late forties, when he was only 15, and appeared in revues presented by comedian Hal Monty. Then came a break while he did his National Service, but by the early fifties he was back appearing on Ray Martin's 'Rhythm Cavalcade' radio series. He also appeared on concerts with Ray's orchestra. Another radio series he became associated with was 'Pertwee's Progress', with Jon Pertwee, Fenella Fielding and Dick Emery, on which he played a comedy part as a little man who always gets knocked about.

Kirk began touring variety theatres and billed as "The Golden Voice of Variety" spent the 1954 summer season on Blackpool's South Pier with that great comedienne Gladys Morgan.

Columbia was the first to take advantage of the Stevens voice on disc, but this was just the start of several labels he appeared on. Following a Parlophone recording early in 1955, that gave Kirk the opportunity to air a song from his homeland

'Here's to the Gordons', Philips Records signed him for their new yellow label Scottish series.

In August 1955, currently doing quite well in variety, he married 21 year old dancer Ann Turner at Tottenham Register Office, no doubt putting him on top of the world. But before the year was out that world was shattered, when one night while on stage at Edinburgh Empire, his strong rich voice was reduced to just a croak. He physically collapsed.

A specialist discovered a growth on Kirk's vocal chords and an operation to remove it was performed at the Royal Middlesex Hospital. For many months he was hardly able to speak, let alone sing. By the time he did, popular music was going through a change that was to see the demise of quality voices like Kirk's in favour of much rubbish. Rock and Roll was fast becoming 'King' of the radio and record deck. The money he had made was soon used up and the couple had to leave their new flat.

Kirk did make a couple more records (although his 'Silver Madonna' was banned by the BBC because of its religious overtones) and he returned to the variety stage, but by the close of the fifties it appears that show-business had more or less passed him by. Many commentators at the time reckoned Kirk Stevens deserved greater things - "better than Whitfield" said one - it seems he just didn't get that lucky break that can make all the difference.

### Kirk Stevens Recordings COLUMBIA

DB 3248 Mar 53 'Tomorrow never comes / Forevermore'  
DB 3353 Oct 53 'Over and over again / You smile at everyone

### but me' PARLOPHONE

R 3829 Mar 54 'To be or not to be / Kiss me again'  
R 3963 Jan 55 'Here's to the Gordons / My dearie, my darling'

### PHILIPS (*Scottish Series*)

YB 9504 May 55 'The bonnie banks o' Loch Lomond /  
y Bay' Rothsa  
YB 9510 Jly 55 'Scotland the brave / Bonnie Gallowa'  
YB 9521 May 57 'Granny's highland home / Lewis bridal song'

### DECCA

F 10863 Mar 57 'This silver Madonna / Once' (*acc by Malcolm Lockyer orch*)

## Ian STEWART

Pianist Ian appears to have spent almost his whole musical career working in top London hotels. A Scot born in 1918 he began as a church organist. During the thirties he acted as piano accompanist to popular singers and in 1935 was engaged by Carroll Gibbons as second pianist with his Orpheans at the Savoy Hotel.

Staying at the Savoy until war broke out Ian, a territorial before the war, was one of the first to enlist joining the Cameron Highlanders and serving in Burma, rising to the rank of Major and awarded an M.B.E. After demob Ian returned to his piano seat at the Savoy, but not for long and in July 1946

he took up a baton to lead his own eight piece at London's plush Berkeley Hotel, a venue from which he regularly broadcast. Following a management policy change (the addition of a rumba band led by Tommy Rogan) in September 1949, Ian reduced to a quintet.

After Carroll Gibbons death in 1954 Ian returned to the Savoy, becoming as well loved a leader as his former boss had been. An extremely proficient pianist and, befitting his clientele, an exceptionally smart and dignified man, he retired in the late seventies and died on 30th July 1989.

Originally recording with the Orpheans he later made some Parlophone sides as a solo artist and with his own quintet, known as Ian Stewart and his Music.

Ian Stewart Recordings  
(solo piano with rhythm unless noted)

#### PARLOPHONE

F 2405 Apl 50 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.1'  
F 2416 Jun 50 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.2 :  
Chattanooga shoe  
shine boy / C'est si bon / Dearie //  
Cherry stones  
/ Out of a clear blue sky / Enjoy  
yourself'  
F 2419 Jly 50 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.3 : If I loved  
you /  
sweet one  
A load of hay / Bewitched // Oh, you  
/ That's a plenty / June is bustin' out  
all over'  
F 2423 Aug 50 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.4 : Your heart  
and my  
heart / I wanna go home / I remember  
the  
cornfields // Hey neighbour / Let's do  
it again /  
Me and my  
shadow'  
F 2424 Sep 50 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.5 : I wanna be  
loved  
/ Mona Lisa / You're only dreaming //  
Candy  
and cake / It's love my darling it's  
love /  
I don't care if the sun  
don't shine'  
F 2428 Oct 50 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.6 : Sentimental  
me /  
Sam's song / Silver dollar // Diane /  
Babette /  
Cha  
rmaine'  
F 2433 Nov 50 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.7'  
F 2440 Jan 51 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.8'  
F 2450 Mar 51 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.9 : Always true  
to  
you in my fashion / Why can't you  
behave /  
So in love // One finger melody / My  
heart cries  
for you / Tennessee  
waltz'  
F 2457 Apl 51 (I.S. and his Music) 'The lady is a tramp /  
Someone to watch  
over me'  
F 2459 May 51 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.10 : I'll  
always love  
you / Be my love / September song //  
Lonely  
dreams, lonely lips, lonely heart / The  
roving  
kind /  
Teasin''

F 2467 Jly 51 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.11 : Too darn  
hot /  
Satins and lace / Ivory rag //  
Mariandl /  
Dadim-dadom / Land of make believe'  
F 2472 Sep 51 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.12 : With these  
hands / You love me / Too young //  
Jezebel /  
10432 sheep / My truly,  
truly fair'  
F 2474 Nov 51 (I.S. and his Music) 'Bali Ha'i /  
Some enchanted  
evening'  
F 2479 Dec 51 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.13 : Scottish  
Quicksteps /  
Irish Waltzes'  
F 2483 Feb 52 (I.S. and his Music) '(It's no) Sin /  
Dow  
n yonder'  
F 2488 Apl 52 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.14 : The  
loveliest  
night of the year / Mistakes /  
Domino // There's  
always room at our house / Any time /  
Painting  
the clouds with  
sunshine'  
F 2494 Jun 52 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.15 : Tell me  
why /  
Be anything / Wheel of fortune // Be  
my life's  
companion / Should I / Singin' in  
the rain'  
F 2498 Aug 52 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.16'  
F 2502 Oct 52 (I.S. and his Music) 'Selection from film  
Lovely  
to Look At : Lovely to look at / Smoke  
gets in  
your eyes // I won't dance /  
Yesterdays'  
F 2505 Dec 52 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.17'  
F 2508 Feb 53 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.18'  
F 2512 Apl 53 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.19'  
F 2516 Jun 53 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.20'  
F 2517 Jly 53 (I.S. and his Music) 'Selection from  
Guys  
and Dolls'  
F 2522 Nov 53 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.21'  
F 2526 Jan 54 (I.S. and his Music) 'Selection from  
The  
King and I'  
F 2530 Mar 54 (I.S. and his Music) 'I could be happy with  
you  
/ A room in  
Bloomsbury'  
F 2534 May 54 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.22 : Cloud  
lucky  
seven / Heart of my heart / The happy  
wanderer  
// Don't laugh at me / I see the moon /  
Secret  
love'  
F 2538 Sep 54 'Piano in Dance Tempo No.23 : Cara mia /  
Dream, dream, dream / Story of  
Tina // Three  
coins in the fountain / Wanted / Little  
things  
mea  
n a lot'  
F 2542 Nov 54 (I.S. and his Music) 'Hold my hand /  
Sky blue shirt and a  
rainbow tie'  
F 2547 Jan 55 (I.S. and his Music) 'The best things  
happen  
while you're dancing / Count your  
blessings  
instead of sheep' (both from the film  
White  
Christmas)

F 2549 Feb 55 'Medley of Quicksteps / Medley of Foxtrots'  
 F 2551 55 'Waltz medley / Foxtrot medley'  
 F 2554 55 'Medley of Quicksteps / Medley of Waltzes'  
 R 4087 Nov 55 'Medley of Foxtrots / Medley of Quicksteps'  
 R 4138 Feb 56 'Medley of Foxtrots / Medley of Quicksteps'  
 R 4182 Jun 56 'Medley of Foxtrots / Medley of Waltzes'  
 R 4200 Sep 56 'Medley of Quicksteps / Medley of Foxtrots'

## Kathy STOBART

A lady with a musical CV that would take some unravelling and no doubt fill a few pages of this book. Suffice to say that over almost six decades saxophone playing Florence Kathleen Stobart has never been short of work. She just rarely settled down in one place for very long.

Born at South Shields in 1925 she began playing saxophone at age twelve (her mother played piano). In 1939 Kathy joined Don Rico's Ladies Orchestra staying with them for a year. Over the next two years she freelanced, playing in touring show bands and also appeared as a showgirl. During 1942 she spent eight months with Peter Fielding's Band at Newcastle, before coming to London and working at Ealing Ballroom.

In 1943 Kathy joined the band of Canadian pianist Art Thompson which was resident at the Embassy Club, marrying him the same year. She remained part of the Thompson outfit throughout most of the forties. In 1948 they spent several months touring across the United States and Canada. During these years Kathy also did solo work that took in a tour of Sweden, and she sat in and broadcast with other leaders including a season with Vic Lewis in 1947. She was guest artist on one of Ted Heath's early Swing Sessions in December 1945. Rated as one of Britain's top tenor stylists, Kathy was always much in demand.

In 1949 she was back playing with Vic Lewis (she occasionally took the vocal spot too) while her husband was way over on the American West Coast appearing with various groups. His parents now lived in Hollywood and he said he would probably settle there. Kathy and Art later divorced.

In January 1950 she formed her own nine piece 'New Music' group, but due to its limited appeal later reformed it with a less progressive style. During May and June they were at the Odeon Restaurant in Basle, northern Switzerland. Although musically successful the band was difficult to sustain financially and in March 1951 Kathy gave up and re-joined Vic Lewis.

Just before its break up the band recorded four sides for the Decibel label (Manchester based and run by the Dixon Roadhouse Record Co. formed in 1942 by two Manchester musicians saxists Frank Dixon and Johnny Roadhouse).

On 17th October 1951 Kathy married one of the Vic Lewis trumpet line up, Bert Courtley, who was as bad as her for hopping in and out of bands. Over the years they had a number of attempts at running their own outfit, but none lasted for long.

In late 1952 Kathy had her first child and gave up professional work for about a year, returning in August 1953 when she signed up with the new Johnny Rogers Dance Band. (husband Bert was with Ken Mackintosh at the time).

Most of Kathy's remaining fifties years were taken up raising her expanding family (three sons), although she couldn't resist the many invitations to deputize and sit in with various bands including Humphrey Lyttleton, who she returned to decades later. Other leaders to benefit from her playing included Tony Kinsey, Eddie Thompson, Blanche Colman and Gracie Cole.

Come the early sixties she was on the road again with her husband in the Bert Courtley Sextet and again led her own band for a while. Following Bert's illness and premature death in 1969, Kathy went back to college and studied clarinet, eventually taking up music tuition herself.

She spent a lot of time during the seventies with Humphrey Lyttleton, plus work with other bands and a number of cruise liner engagements. During the eighties she either led or co-led various groups and for much of the nineties has been back as a member of the Humphrey Lyttleton Band. As I said before, a lady with a long musical past that's far from over yet.

Kathy Stobart Recordings  
 PARLOPHONE

R 3208 Jly 49 (*featured soloist with Vic Lewis Orch*) 'No orchids'

DECIBEL (*Kathy Stobart Band*)

P2 Mar 51 'He was a good man as good men go (v. KS) /

Lover come

back to me'

P3 Mar 51 'That old black magic (v. Franklyn Boyd) /

Idaho'

## Lew STONE

Leader of one of the 1930's most successful bands, that recorded so many sides with top vocalist Al Bowlly, Lew Stone a Londoner was born at Stepney on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1898. Youngest of seven children he learned piano as a lad and ran away to join a concert party, but had to return home when it broke up. Then, instead of following his father into the cabinet making trade as expected, he took a job on the docks while working as a night club pianist in the evenings. In the mid-twenties Lew joined Bert Ralton's Havana Band and toured South Africa, until Bert was killed on a hunting trip there. It was many of the arrangements Lew did for Ralton's band that brought him to the notice of other bandleaders and once back in Britain, Lew opened his own office where he turned out some superb arrangements for top bandleaders like Ambrose, Jack Payne and Roy Fox. He also wrote an authoritative book on arranging. Between 1931 and 1934 Lew was musical director for British Dominion Films at Elstree supplying the music for over twenty films. In 1930 he joined Roy Fox as pianist at the Cafe de Paris, staying with him two years during which time they moved to the Monseigneur Restaurant. When Fox returned to the Cafe de Paris in 1932 Stone stayed as leader at the Monseigneur, taking over most of the original band. Now established as a bandleader Lew played seasons at the Cafe Anglais and opened the new ballroom at the Hollywood Restaurant (formally the Prince's) in Piccadilly,



before returning to the Monseigneur again. (*the Monseigneur closed in 1934 and became a cinema*) The late thirties saw Lew wave his baton in a new direction, as musical director for stage musicals. In February 1937 he led the orchestra for 'On Your Toes' at London's Palace Theatre. By November it was 'Hide and Seek' at The Hippodrome and a year later 'Under Your Hat' back at the Palace.

During the war years Lew played a season at The Dorchester, was MD of 'Something In The Air' at the Palace Theatre and then toured a big band (that had 14 year old Helen Mack and blind pianist Peter Gray as vocalists) giving troop concerts up and down the country seven days a week, a gruelling schedule that led to his collapse from exhaustion in November 1944. After a few months rest he was back on the bandstand at the Royal Court Hotel, Southampton.

In 1945 Lew formed his Nova Tones, leading on the Novachord organ, a group that broadcast and recorded for Decca. They played an 18 month season at the Embassy Club and appeared in the 1946 film thriller 'Appointment With Crime'.

In 1947 he was back in his musical director role leading a 30 piece orchestra for 'Annie Get Your Gun', the show that introduced Dolores Gray to the London stage, when it opened at the Coliseum on the 9<sup>th</sup> June. This was a long-running musical that kept Lew employed until September 1949, when he left to take a well earned rest in Switzerland.

On radio his orchestra broadcast regularly on a series titled 'Let's Make Music', that featured his Moonstones vocal group. Over on Luxembourg he supported the aspiring artists on Hughie Green's 'Opportunity Knocks'.

Back from his holidays, Lew returned to West End clubland in May 1951 when he became MD of the newly opened Pigalle Restaurant in Piccadilly (the old Prince's premises again). Lew remained at the Pigalle, making several live broadcasts, until September 1953 when Woolf Phillips took over. He then took an eight piece into Oddenino's Restaurant for a couple of years. In February 1954 Lew celebrated his 21st year as a bandleader.

Come late 1955 he gave up the dance band again and had a spell as MD for the show 'Wild Grows the Heather', but in June 1956 was back on the bandstand as resident leader at Manchester's Ritz Ballroom. His vocalist was a veteran from the forties dance band scene, Marjorie Kingsley. In September Lew moved to Leeds Locarno with a new singer, 20 year old Brenda Kay, late of Eric Delaney's Band.

Now a Mecca contract bandleader Lew moved to several locations, including two weeks at London's Lyceum Ballroom in August 1958. During the sixties he concentrated mainly on his business, Lew Stone Enterprises, which supplied bands and artists for club work, whilst leading a sextet on clavioline he also continued to make regular broadcasts.

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 1962 Lew and his wife Joyce celebrated their silver wedding. Joyce, who was also a talented pianist and taught music at a school, had met Lew during her 21st birthday party at the Monseigneur Club when he was playing there.

Lew, a slim fit active man who had always been keen on sport, died following a heart attack at Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February 1969. He was seventy.

Lew made his first record, coupling 'The wedding of the painted doll' and 'Broadway melody', as Lewis Stone and his Orchestra on Duophone in July 1929.

As pianist with the Roy Fox Band he played on their recordings from 1930 until 1932. During this time he also led the Durium Dance Band, the house band on Durium Records. From October 1932 he appeared on the Decca label leading his Monseigneur Band and, except for a year's deflection to Regal Zonophone from November 1934, he stayed on Decca almost all his recording career. Many of the early Decca's had a vocal by Al Bowlly and much of Bowlly's best work appears on Lew Stone discs. By the mid-forties Lew's record output had just about dried up, but I've listed those he did make.

#### Lew Stone post-1945 Recordings

DECCA	<i>(with his Novatones)</i>	
F 8614	Apl 46	'Ashby-de-la-Zouch (v. <i>Helen Mack &amp; Ronnie O'Dell</i> ) / Let it snow, let it snow (v. <i>R. O'Dell</i> )'
F 8615	Apl 46	'I'll buy that dream (v. <i>Helen Mack &amp; Ronnie O'Dell</i> ) / Gimme crack corn (v. <i>Joe Crossman</i> )'
COLUMBIA	<i>(leading Coliseum orch with Dolores Gray and cast of 'Annie Get Your Gun')</i>	
DX 1379	47	'The girl that I marry / They say it's wonderful / There's no business like show business / You can't get a man with a gun / My defences are down / I got lost in his arms'
DX 1380	47	'Moonshine lullaby / They say it's wonderful / Doin' what comes naturally / Who do you love, I hope? / Anything you can do / I'm a bad, bad man / I got the sun in the morning'
DB 2451	Oct 48	<i>(orch with Dolores Gray)</i> 'You can't be true dear / The night has a thousand eyes'
DECCA		
F 9187	Jly 49	<i>(orch with Leo Fuld &amp; The Wardour Singers)</i> 'Pigalle / Homeland'
F 9210	Sep 49	<i>(orch with Hughie Diamond)</i> 'Riders in the sky / Oh tell me gypsy'
		<i>(a further four titles with Hughie Diamond were recorded but issued on US London label only)</i>
F 9224	Oct 49	<i>(orch with Leo Fuld &amp; Wardour Singers)</i> 'A letter to my mother / Sleep, my baby, sleep'
COLUMBIA		
DB 2636	Jan 50	<i>(orch with Josef Locke)</i> 'In the chapel in San Rimo / We all have a song in our hearts'

**Beryl STOTT**

Leader of the chorus backing so many singers, chiefly on the Philips and Pye labels, Beryl was married to bandleader-arranger-record producer Wally Stott.

In 1950, as Beryl Brewster (her maiden name I assume), she was one of The Tailormaid's vocal group. In the 1953 film 'The Love Lottery' she appeared as part of a vocal trio (the other two being Linda Russell and Joyce Fraser - who along with Sylvia Morraïne made up The Tailormaid's) backing a duet by the films' stars Herbert Lom and Jill Allan. The same year Beryl toured in the Jack Parnell Band's stage show 'Jazz Wagon' as a member of The Sapphires vocal group.

During the fifties Beryl managed to fit in her domestic routine, she brought up two children, while continuing to lead a professional role providing her Beryl Stott Singers, Chorus, Group etc. for the recording industry. I've no idea how many records they appeared on (a little job for somebody there!) but it was certainly a lot. In 1960 she was singing with The Zodiacs.

Although I am not aware of the date or circumstances I am informed by 'Pip' Wedge that Beryl eventually committed suicide.

## Wally STOTT

From Mexborough, Yorkshire, Wally was already playing clarinet and saxophone in local dance bands at the age of 13. Born in 1924, at school he also played violin, piano and ukulele. When he left he joined Archie's Juvenile Band in Leeds, staying almost a year before moving on to work in the bands of Rube Sunshine, Bram Martin and Billy Merrin.

He was with Merrin at Derby Plaza when wartime restrictions caused the band to break up. Wally then came to London and began studying arranging. He joined Oscar Rabin's Band in September 1941, staying for a year or so before becoming 2nd alto and arranger with Geraldo. He made his first recordings, on the Rex label, as a member of the Rabin band.

Wally spent several years with Geraldo, during which time he arranged and played on numerous broadcast and recording sessions. In September 1948 he left Gerry to concentrate on arranging and conducting film music. In 1949 he was on radio leading a 42 piece orchestra assembled by clarinettist Maurice Taylor. Mainly a showcase for Taylor's solo spots the best reviews were for Wally's arrangements, with the respected Melody Maker critic Maurice Burman awarding him a Burman's Bauble stating "One day Wally Stott will be a great musician". This was a prediction that certainly came true.

During 1950 Wally was back on the bandstand in the new Jack Nathan Band at London's Cocanut Grove, but left after only a few months because it restricted his freelance work. In 1953 he signed a long term contract as arranger-conductor with the new Philips Record Company.

As well as backing artists like Gary Miller, David Hughes, Anne Shelton, Shirley Bassey, Ronnie Carroll, Frankie Vaughan, The Beverley Sisters, The Kaye Sisters and many others, Wally also made some great instrumental discs. A favourite of this writer was, and still is, 'The cat from Coos Bay' that owes no apology to the Dave Cavanagh original. By 1959,

while still maintaining a presence on Philips, Wally was also appearing on the Pye label.

He provided the musical content for several radio shows including 'Hancock's Half Hour' and 'The Goon Show', where his ability to provide off the cuff musical links to set the scene and match the cast's crazy antics proved invaluable. He appeared, as a musical director, in Frankie Vaughan's film 'The Lady is a Square'.

Wally eventually went to live in America, working on film and television music. Later emerging as Angela Morley, she produced the music for several films including 'Looking Glass Wars' in 1969, 'Where Eight Bells Toll' 1971 and the lovely 'Watership Down' in 1978. She also worked in television and provided the background themes for the 'Dallas' and 'Dynasty' series. Angela died 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009 aged 84.

Wally Stott Instrumental Recordings  
M.G.M.

MGM 645 Jun 53 'Serenade for a tin horn /  
love' My one and only  
PHILIPS

PB 150 Jun 53 'Limelight theme / Incidental music  
from

Limelight'  
PB 168 Sep 53 (as Jeff Morley Orch) 'The Melba waltz /  
A girl called

Linda'  
PB 222 Feb 54 'The shadow waltz / Luxembourg polka'  
PB 229 Jan 54 'Theme from The Glenn Miller Story /  
Footsteps in

the fog'  
PB 235 Feb 54 'Tango tonight' (on one side only)  
PB 252 Apr 54 'Teenager / Catwalk'  
PB 275 Jly 54 'Deep purple / Spellbound'  
PB 294 May 54 'The bandit / Song of the high seas'  
PB 298 Jly 54 (with Kenny Baker) 'All the things you are  
/

How deep is the  
ocean'  
PB 310 Jly 54 'Postman's knock / Venezuela'  
PB 318 Sep 54 (with Max Jaffa) 'Romance /

The last rose of  
summer'  
PB 344 Oct 54 'Good King Wenceslas / The first Noel'  
PB 345 Oct 54 'O come all ye faithful /

Silent night,  
holy night'  
PB 351 Oct 54 'The cat from Coos Bay / The night ride'  
PB 354 Nov 54 'Jingle bells / Sleigh ride'

PB 443 May 55 'Lucky strike / Cat slick'  
PB 468 Jun 55 (WS & his Novelty Ensemble) 'Mr. Pastry's  
polka / The dizzy

duckling'  
PB 480 Jly 55 'A kid for two farthings /  
Lily Watkins

melody'  
PB 718 Aug 57 (with Murray Campbell) 'Mandolin  
serenade /  
Gypsy

trumpet'  
PB 796 Feb 58 'Catch a falling star /  
Red River rose' (with

chorus)  
PYE

7N15218 Oct 59 'Christmas sleigh bells / The  
Christmas waltz'  
7N15271 May 60 'The unforgiven / Mr. Lucky'

PHILIPS

326549 62 'Bouncing at midnight / Railroad blues'  
 BF 1616 67 'I sing Noel / Pat a pan'  
 BF 1712 68 'We will meet again / Santa Catarina'

TEMPO (Monty Sunshine Trio)

A 125 Dec 55 St. Phillip Street breakdown / Wild cat blues'

## Monty SUNSHINE

A long time stalwart of the Chris Barber Jazz Band, Monty Sunshine went on to lead his own outfit and was still active, performing and recording during the 1990's.

He was born in London on 8th April 1928 and, following a spell of evacuation to Northampton, became a student at Camberwell School of Art (he was responsible for many early fifties Vogue L.P. covers) where he became interested in jazz, buying his first clarinet. His father was a violinist and as a child Monty had played the flute.

Most of the latter forties found him in the R.A.F where he played clarinet in a band led by trumpeter Les Condon called The Eager Beavers. Come the fifties Monty had sat in with several bands, becoming a regular in the Crane River Jazz Band led by Ken Colyer. When Ken formed his own full time band Monty was in it alongside trombonist Chris Barber. Following the acrimonious split up of the Colyer band in 1954 he moved into the new one formed by Barber and enjoyed seven years in that most successful band.

It was Monty's clarinet solo on the Barber band's recording of the Sidney Bechet tune 'Petite Fleur' that took it to number three on the hit parade in 1959 and his 'Hushabye' was another big seller.

In January 1961 Monty left Chris Barber, at the time he claimed he had been sacked, but didn't know why "I just got a telephone call while the band was on holiday" he said. He lost no time getting back on the road again though, touring Europe with rhythm backing as The Monty Sunshine Quartet. He made some recordings under that name with Diz Disley guitar, Jack Fallon bass and Lennie Hastings drums but I don't know if they were on the tour.

Next came his own jazz band that started a round of musical chairs in its formation. Rod Mason joined on trumpet giving up his own band to do so - drummer Nick Nicholls left Lonnie Donegan to join (Pete Appleby left Mick Mulligan to replace Nicholls) - Gerry Salisbury, bass, also from Mick Mulligan joined (leaving Mulligan looking for replacements for both Appleby and Salisbury). Making up the band were Geoff Sowden trombone, Dickie Bishop banjo and Johnny Parker piano. Beryl Bryden was often there too on vocals.

The band made its first broadcast on 'Jazz Club' on Thursday 23rd March 1961 and was on 'Go Man Go' at the end of April. During May they toured Germany. They made several further broadcasts including 'Trad Tavern' in October, where Monty's old boss Chris Barber led the resident band. By the mid sixties with the 'trad' jazz boom waning in Britain, Monty found most of his work abroad. Over the years the band saw a number of personnel changes and a few different names, in 1968 they were the New Iberia Stompers. During the 1970's the Crane River Jazz Band was resurrected for a while and Monty also often played with his old boss Chris Barber's band.

From 1961 Monty recorded on Polydor, Columbia and later London. There were also LP's on London and the American Kapp label.

Monty Sunshine Recordings

NIXA JAZZ

NJ 2011 Sep 56 'Hushaby' (C. Barber Band on reverse)  
 NJ 2020 57 'The old rugged cross' "

POLYDOR (Monty Sunshine Quartet)

NH 66971 Nov 61 'Sunstroke / Coney Island washboard  
 Bishop)' (v. Dickie

COLUMBIA (Monty Sunshine Quartet)

DB 4588 61 'The sunshine of your blues / Jacqueline'  
 (Monty Sunshine Jazz Band)

DB 4681 61 'Creole love call / South'  
 DB 4744 Nov 61 'Gimme a pig foot and a bottle of beer /  
 Sobbin' and cryin' (both v. Beryl

Bryden)'  
 DB 4849 62 'Saratoga shout / Seven of hearts'

LONDON

HLR9629 Nov 62 'Gonna build a mountain / Hushabye'  
 HLR9822 Dec 63 'Charmaine / Carnival'

UNITED ARTISTS

UA 2245 Sep 68 'Two lovers / Hushabye mountain'